

## Russell Davies: 'Larkin at Sixty'



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## The signs of success

J. Bruce Brackenridge

H. J. EYSENCK and D. K. B. NIAS  
Astrology: Science or Superstition?  
244pp. Temple Smith. £7.95.  
0 85117 214 8

MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH  
The New Astrologer  
320pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £10.  
0 283 98758 8

Science is what a scientist does when other scientists are doing science. That activity does not touch upon astrology in any form: analysis, practice or even reflection. To become involved in a serious investigation of the validity of astrological claims is enough to place one beyond the pale of the scientific establishment, but the psychologists H. J. Eysenck and D. K. B. Nias take that chance.

*Astrology: Science or Superstition?* is well-conceived, thoroughly researched and finely constructed book on the subject of astrological research by these two scientists from the London University Institute of Psychiatry. It is a book that will not please either the traditional scientist or the traditional astrologer. The authors are fully aware of that fact; but, inspired by the work of Michel and Françoise Gauquelin concerning a "surprising correspondence between personality and planetary position at birth", Professor Eysenck and Dr Nias have made a systematic search of the literature to discover just what is the empirical evidence for and against astrology. This book, which was the result of that challenge, provides some fascinating answers. But in the final analysis it raises as many questions concerning the nature of science as it supplies answers concerning the validity of astrology.

What is science? C. Truesdell, the historian of science, said that when a scientist is faced with that question "he will adopt an expression that is at once solemn and shifty-eyed: solemn because he feels he ought to declare an opinion, shifty-eyed because he is wondering how to conceal the fact that he has no opinion to declare". Yet obviously there is an activity called science and those engaged in it are clear concerning how, where and when they're practising it. On the one hand, it contains the important element of empiricism, the ultimate appeal to the facts. Francis Bacon appears as the patron saint of this approach. In his *Novum Organum* of 1620 he set down rigid rules to guide the would-be scientist in the collection of natural evidence and to suppress the construction of theory until the laws of nature should spring full-grown from the raw data.

On the other hand, the Logical Positivist who bloomed after 1920 would have the emphasis the other way round. Science begins with the statement of theories and from such fundamental statements flows the directional experimental work that confirms or modifies them. The goal of science is to create a world that reason can understand, and despite Bacon's claim for universal empirical objectivity, the eye of the theorist is directed only to chosen areas of theoretical concern. Put more strongly, the only facts we see are those induced by theory.

Many philosophers have played with variations on these twin theories of fact and theory, but few with more immediate impact than in the recent work of Thomas Kuhn. In 1962, this young physicist, turned historian of science, turned philosopher of science, published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, in which he suggested an alternative view of the complex activity called science. It was a view not fully developed, yet fresh enough and potentially productive enough to catch the attention of the philosophical establishment. Its importance is attested by the volume and strength of its critics as much as by the ranks of its defenders. It arose from Kuhn's reflections on how scientists teach other scientists and potential scientists about science: Kuhn sought to find in the textbooks of science the conformity

and agreement on definition, values and rules that make up the scientific method. Instead he found that the disciplines do not stand upon such principles alone. The uniformity that he sought was not explicitly expressed. There were elements that could not be articulated in any direct fashion and that were communicated from generation to generation by what Kuhn called "exemplars" or "paradigms". In their simplest sense, these exemplars are the problems set at the end of the chapter in textbooks. For Kuhn, however, they are not simply exercises to test the student's understanding of the material presented in the chapter, but rather they are devices for communicating subtleties about

astrology, in which he challenged many of the fallacies of astrological practices but defended the essential truth and application of astrological prediction. Granted these were much-restricted applications and he rejected most of the traditional trappings, but it was clear to him that there were "gems to be found in the mire". He admonished the critics of astrology not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. In contrast, however, by the close of the seventeenth century there was no astronomer of note who embraced, much less defended, the practice of astrology. To say that the physical cause of Newton's astronomical gravitation had succeeded the geometric causes of

copies: it reached its nineteenth-century peak in 1839 when 560,000 copies were disposed of, but by 1927 its circulation had fallen to a mere 16,000 copies and its copyright was then sold. But the decline of one particular popular almanac did not mean that the appeal of popular astrology had waned. In 1930 the London *Sunday Express* became the first important newspaper to capitalize on this popular appetite. On Thursday, August 21, 1930, Princess Margaret Rosa was born. Since that news would be three days old when the *Sunday Express* of August 24 came out, the editor decided to give it a fresh angle by publishing a short article on the Princess's horoscope. The rest is history. The

*Tetrabiblos*, the definitive work on astrology. It is a tradition that reached its fruition at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the astrological and astrological work of Kepler. Between these two astronomer-astrologers is a long line of critics, reformers and defenders.

But of main interest for Eysenck and Nias is the work that has been built upon the published results of the Gauquelins. It is perhaps best represented by a group affiliated with the Astrological Society of London. The members of that society are largely traditional astrologers but a small number of them are much concerned with scientific astrology. To that end they have participated in the publication of a critical review entitled *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology*, and of a journal entitled *Correlations*, devoted to empirical research into astrology. The aim of this group is to bring to astrology the same rigour and objectivity that they associate with traditional science. They are frustrated on the one hand by the indifference of the larger scientific community who ignore their work, and on the other hand by the extreme bias brought to evaluation of their work by those scientists who do look critically at it.

Central to the entire controversy are the Gauquelins themselves, or more correctly, their published findings. The Gauquelins insist that they are not astrologers, nor do they hold to any of the findings of traditional astrology. In fact they started their research as psychologists with the intention of debunking astrological claims. They inaugurated in 1950 a statistical study of the traditional astrological indices as predictors of successful professional careers. They looked for correlations between the positions of a specific planet, such as Mars, at the moment of an individual's birth and the area of success of that individual in later life. They anticipated that they would find no relationship and were surprised when they did find what they claim to be a meaningful statistical correlation. The analysis was repeated, the sample enlarged, the statistics were checked and control samples created. Other areas were explored and other correlations were discovered. In the best Baconian tradition, the facts were ruthlessly pursued. The results were published and critics were invited to comment upon, analyse and reproduce the results. The Gauquelins were puzzled by the correlation but convinced of its existence.

Few scientists took notice of their work. There is, however, a group in Belgium comprised of astronomers, demographers, statisticians and other scientists known as the "Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Alleged Paranormal Phenomena", with affiliated groups in England, the U.S.A. and elsewhere. Their motto is "Nothing rejected a priori. Nothing affirmed without proof." With most of the claims they have investigated, little had to be affirmed. In the Gauquelins' case, however, they had difficulty. The analysis has attracted controversy fifteen years and the claims and counter-claims make an interesting case study for Kuhn's contention of the importance of metaphysical convictions in science. Challenges, both statistical and empirical, were set for the Gauquelins and each success was met by confused doubts and new challenges. Seen from one point of view, that is as it should be. Science is demanding of its practitioners and the new findings must prove themselves beyond the shadow of a doubt. Seen from the other point of view, it demonstrates bias, prejudice and hostility. But that should not surprise the philosopher of science. For science is not now, nor ever has been, the open-minded observation of facts that Bacon would have had it.

Science, even in its most restricted form, demands more than a collection of statistics; there must be a cause. Where is the theoretical element in this strange correlation? Clearly the gravitational influence of the planets can have no measurable effect. What then is the scientific agent by which the planets manifest their influence? The Gauquelins are aware of the need for such a cause and attempt to supply at least a plausible line of attack. They

science that cannot be obtained directly. This view of scientific education called forth from Kuhn an even greater insight into the structure of science itself. Correspondingly, "paradigm" in a more universal sense he called a "disciplinary matrix": a complex of examples, symbolic generalizations and shared values that stretched on ad infinitum. It contained elements that could be clearly identified and given as "rules" and other elements that guided the action of the scientist but could not be articulated directly. This combination of the physical and the metaphysical is the measure of scientific activity. It is not simply concerned with facts alone, nor controlled by theory alone, nor controlled by some complex combination of the two. The elements of fact and theory are fundamental to the activity called science but by no means are they alone capable of directing that activity.

Thus there are things that scientists "know" and "believe" that are based on elements other than fact or theory. Only within this restricted paradigm or disciplinary matrix is the scientist "open-minded". It is this consensus of values that permits science to progress so quickly a rapid fashion. Moreover, it may even be the factor that identifies scientific activity as progress. But whatever this distributed structure is, it too looser recognizes the activity of astrology as having a place in the temple of science. Every scientist judged by serious astrologers as being worthy of the name "Kuhn" that astrology is "nonsense" and there is no need to defend this belief.

This attitude was not always the case. Not that astrology in some earlier times did not have its critics, for it did, but it was possible for a scientist involved in what we now recognize as science - for example, astronomy - also to investigate astrology. The renowned astronomer Kepler wrote a short work in 1601 entitled *On the More Certain Fundamentals of*

Kepler's harmonic relationships is to oversimplify the situation. The rejection was a much more subtle effort, one undertaken by science in an almost passive way. Astrology was dispatched by satirical attacks such as Swift's comic assault on the astrologer Partridge in his *Prediction of Isaac Bickerstaff* for 1708. As Keith Thomas has put it, "For the most part, the subject (astrology) was left to die a natural death. The clergy and satirists chased it into its grave, but the scientists were unrepresented at the funeral."

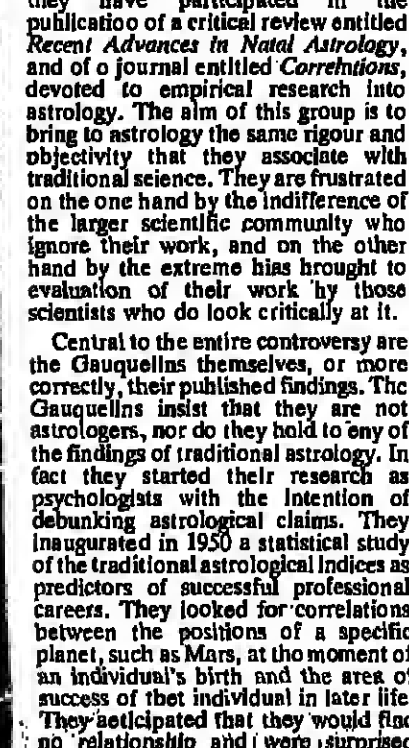
But was it a fatal case of death? The answer to that question requires a closer look at the activity called astrology. There are in fact three separate categories that one can create to accommodate the multiple activities fitting under that rubric. First there is the class that can be called "popular" or "eclectic" astrology. It is the most visible since it is represented by the daily newspaper columns or by the flood of popular books and magazines on the subject. Its analysis depends only upon the "sun sign" - ie, the location at the time of one's birth of the sun in its annual path relative to the fixed constellations in the zodiac. All those who were born between the first of spring and April 20 are "Aries" because the sun was then in the thirty-degree band of the zodiac around the constellation Aries. It is a practice judged by serious astrologers as being almost worthless because of its extremely limited input of information. At best it offers a series of bland generalizations that apply loosely to a large group of people. The roots of popular astrology can be traced through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the tradition of such long-established almanacs as *Zadkiel's Almanac* and *Raphael's Prophectic Messenger*. The *Vox Stellarum*, for example, had a sale in Great Britain in 1768 of nearly 107,000

flood of newspaper astrology which followed that success is still with us. Second category can be constructed entitled "traditional" astrology. It is to be contrasted to popular astrology by its concern for detail and its dedication to the long tradition of astrology as a discipline. It is to be contrasted to the category to follow in that it does not seek a "scientific" basis for its activity. It sees astrology as more of an art than a science. It simply defends its practice on the basis that it works. There is no systematic attempt to support this assertion by statistical techniques nor to discuss physical causes for astrological influences, except for a vague reference to the "sympathy" between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Its modern revival in an organizational form is related to the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875 by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and others. She spread the society as she travelled from New York, to India, to London. The movement initially had its roots in spiritualism and other occult activities. It was Alan Leo, an early convert in London, who wedded astrology to the Theosophical doctrines. He eventually practiced this art on a large and well-organized professional scale. The Theosophical Society still meets in London and still maintains its astrological lodge.

But it is the third category that served as the stimulus for the research of Eysenck and Nias. This category, given its tradition, aims and practice, can be called "scientific astrology". It is a term calculated to raise the hackles of both the traditional scientist and the traditional astrologer. But it is an activity that has its roots in the early work of Ptolemy, a scientist who in the second century AD produced both the *Almagest*, the definitive work on classical astronomy, and the



Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91), founder, in 1875, of the Theosophical Society: an illustration from Emilegout's *Victorian Women* by Elizabeth Longford, which appears in paperback format on July 29 (250pp. Macmillan Papermac. £4.95, 0 333 32638 5). Madame Blavatsky's formidable presence - enhanced rather than the reverse by the unique wheelbarrow she used to transport her sixteen stone - captured many adherents for the esoteric's syncretistic doctrines, among them Alan Bennett ("My darling Penelope" to Mme Blavatsky's "You... I, female Ulysses") who became a leader of the movement after her mentor's death. Mme Blavatsky's claims to occult expertise were, however, exposed as fraudulent by the Society for Psychical Research; trappings and sifting panels were noted in their report.



Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91), founder, in 1875, of the Theosophical Society: an illustration from Emilegout's *Victorian Women* by Elizabeth Longford, which appears in paperback format on July 29 (250pp. Macmillan Papermac. £4.95, 0 333 32638 5). Madame Blavatsky's formidable presence - enhanced rather than the reverse by the unique wheelbarrow she used to transport her sixteen stone - captured many adherents for the esoteric's syncretistic doctrines, among them Alan Bennett ("My darling Penelope" to Mme Blavatsky's "You... I, female Ulysses") who became a leader of the movement after her mentor's death. Mme Blavatsky's claims to occult expertise were, however, exposed as fraudulent by the Society for Psychical Research; trappings and sifting panels were noted in their report.







# Differing and deferring

John Sturrock

## CHRISTOPHER NORRIS

*Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*  
157pp. Methuen. £6.50 (paperback).  
£2.95.  
0416 320600

## T. K. SEUNG

*Structuralism and Hermeneutics*  
310pp. Columbia University Press.  
£29.25.  
0231 052782

Deconstruction is sworn to purge our minds of "the metaphysics of presence", or of that sentimental presumption we hold fast to as readers that the meanings of what we read are certified by the presence behind the mere words of a transcendent Someone of whom the text is an authoritative emanation. The Derrideans would do away with such redundant plantations and deny any beyond to the text, which, they say, has been cut everlastingly adrift from its human source by its commitment to writing and to the public domain. Given which, Deconstruction should be (re-)opening the way to a style of literary criticism in which authorship plays no part and where proper names are discounted: a criticism in which ideas are advanced and tested free from anxieties over proprietorship. Yet it is not working out like that; to date Deconstruction has been conducted all too theatrically in the names of a few star professors, who have shown no sign at all of wishing on themselves a solemn dissolution in favour of their texts.

Thus the index to Christopher Norris's very competent and energetic little book contains some 120 proper names as well as such giveaway entities as, "allology: Paul de Man on . . ." or "belatedness (Bleau) . . .", which is going too far in the subordination of ideas to their temporary embodiments. What *Deconstruction* testifies to before all else is the "presence" of Jacques Derrida, who gets a whole column to himself in the index. In a short book, Norris mixes with much skill the exposition of Derrida's teachings with an account of their success in the United States, and chiefly at Yale. Here a map would have helped, to show that the Derridan faithful have multiplied most effectively in those centres of learning that he has visited in person: the locus of his greatest

influence might coincide quite precisely with his academic itinerary.

Norris summarizes neatly and confidently the principal arguments which Derrida has promulgated in fifteen years of high productivity. He fits Deconstruction into a narrative of critical movements in which it functions as the dénouement, as an outcome, first, of the New Criticism and then of Structuralism. Norris assumes, in the interests of progress, that Structuralism has had its day, even though he should have admitted that there are a great many literary and academic circles, both here and in the United States, where it has yet to arrive. But rather than Structuralism as such, he singles out as the episode he requires for his story the work of Jonathan Culler. His reasons are polemical; though he is generally noncommittal about where he stands himself, Norris does have an ideological row to hoe. He is a friend of the new and the subversive in criticism, and takes Culler as his token Structuralist because Culler has watered Structuralism down and entered into a compromise with the humanism of the New Critics. Norris is looking for more virile attitudes than this. His own admiration goes to the Genghis Khan school of Deconstructionists, of whom he writes: "The claims of analysis have never been pressed so far as by conceptual rhetoricians like de Man. Nor has criticism ever taken on such courage, intellectual or stylistic. In asserting its claim as a self-respecting discipline of thought."

It is the flamboyance and assertiveness of Deconstructionists which seem in the end to weigh more with Norris than the well-foundedness of the case for Deconstruction, and this is a pity, seeing how good he is at the elucidation of arguments as refined and difficult as many of Derrida's. Anyone reading *Deconstruction* will be helped greatly to follow the logic of Derrida's work. That logic asks really that we drop the word Deconstruction and talk rather of Post-structuralism, since only by grasping its relations with Structuralism do we have a chance of seeing the full point of Deconstruction. If there is a key exercise in practical deconstruction it is Derrida's lengthy and masterly unpeeling of Saussure in *De la grammatologie*, in which he uses Saussure's own insights into the differential nature of language, to

reveal inconsistencies in his position. Derrida's case is that Saussure, true to the western way of thought, clung to an essentialist, metaphysical view of meaning, as something that was "expressed" by the word, i.e. as something independent of and prior to its material manifestation. In this view meaning is an entity, fully present in the moment of its emission. But such a view does not square with Saussure's deeper view of language as a system of interdependent, labile forms, in which there can be no fully present entities at all. If Derrida is right, post-Structuralism is the true Structuralism, the one which Saussure should have given us and would have done, had he not been one more victim of our western metaphysical illusion.

Norris gives estimable short accounts of Derrida's deconstructions of Saussure, Rousseau and Husserl, and does well to bring out the new status of Nietzsche as the heroic precursor of Deconstruction, the philosopher who joyed in the inseparable rhetoricalness of natural language. Joy through rhetoric is by now the war-cry of the deconstructionists, even if none of them as yet has learnt to write with the force and profundity of Nietzsche himself. Norris backs the view that the ebullient self-awareness and high literary ambition of such critics as Paul de Man have elevated them into those grander regions previously reserved for the "philosophers". But he might have defied the sort of "philosophers" he had in mind. Seers and aphorists such as Nietzsche have usually been assigned to literature by Anglo-American philosophers, in order to mark them off from the sober and professional legions of empiricists.

The deconstructionists are claiming too much for themselves. "It now becomes possible to argue - indeed impossible to deny - that literary texts are less deconstructed than the discourse of philosophy, precisely because they implicitly acknowledge and exploit their own rhetorical status." I don't know what unprecedented form of words might be construed as an "implicit" acknowledgment, when acknowledgments are explicit or nothing, but Norris's whole proposition is any way fanciful. To take it seriously would be to conclude that the end of Deconstruction will be megalomania and a total severance of language from its referential uses.

Better to be deluded with the philosophers than cozened by the knowing wordplay of the rhetoricians. Such presumptions, however, are no necessary part of Deconstruction, but have to do with the personality cult that it should now be separated from. I wish Norris had done more to play down the spectacular side of the movement.

There are many fewer names, and fewer concessions to spectacle, in *Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, in which a Texan philosopher, T. K. Seung, traces the evolution in contemporary thought from the untenable objectivism of the Structuralists to the untenable subjectivism of the post-Structuralists. Structuralism he finds fault with for its ignoring of history and context, and its mistaken pursuit of supposed universal truths; post-Structuralism for its relapse into an extreme and debilitating relativism, unconstrained by any recognition that there are constants as well as variables in the texts with which it engages. Seung's own preference is for the German tradition of "historical objectivism", which strives to recover the true meaning of texts by prolonged attention to their historical context.

Seung is a patient and forthright critic of philosophical and other arguments. He is especially keen when he identifies the paradoxes in positions such as Derrida's, asking whether it is possible to philosophize at all if the theoretical terms you employ in doing so lack any ideal content common to each and every occurrence. Is it possible, that is, for Derrida's meta-language to be as playful as the object-languages on which he exercises it, without destroying whatever validity could be claimed for it? Here Seung surely points the finger at the deconstructionists' most disonest argument, which is that their own texts are as self-destructing as those they study. Norris tries to cover them against this charge by asserting that a Derridan term such as *différance* has no "single, self-identical meaning", but rather oscillates between a sense of "deferring" and a sense of "deferring".

As I understand him, he is proposing that *différance* thus enacts the deferral of meaning and the "undecidability" so crucial to Derrida's thought, and that the meaning of the term is never fully present in a single occurrence of it. Yet I would say that *différance* means "deferral" and functions in the same familiar way that other words do, contrary to Norris's implication that it is the master-word to which all other words should be seen, functionally, as conforming.

Seung's book is a commentary well worth having on a range of Structuralist and post-Structuralist theses. He spends too long, for sure, bating down one door I had thought already unhinged: he exposes the pretensions and failures of Lévi-Strauss and Jakobson's dire analysis of Baudelaire's sonnet, "Les chaus", Nor is Seung convincing when he complains against Roland Barthes as a semiotician that Barthes was wrong to believe that everything in a given culture has been semantized, or can be regarded as participating in "sign systems" by virtue of their conventionally established meanings.

Turkey dinners have a meaning, it seems, chicken dinners don't - in Texas, that is. This is laudable, which should not have their connotations removed so brutally. Seung writes as if the semantics of food were somehow complete before it had begun. To a Texan, chicken dinners may be less obviously meaningful than turkey dinners, but how could they fail to have some conventional meaning? For a start, chicken dinners are not turkey dinners, which could mean quite a lot if they are eaten at Thanksgiving.

At the end of *Structuralism and Hermeneutics* Seung hits a final, given the high importance accorded to the end in the post-Structuralist heresies, on a most intriguing metaphor, when he invokes what he calls the "nirvana" to which Derrida aspires, as that ideal state in which all differentiation has ceased and where language is "finally released from the verbal karma of reference and representation". I think he is on to something here. French thought of the past twenty years offers convergent evidence of just such Buddhist leanings, in Lévi-Strauss, in Barthes (in his love affair with Japan and with zen) and, if darkly, in Derrida, working to subvert the oppositions by which we in the West traditionally order our thoughts. It is as if, after the strains and excitements of the binary, dialectical years, the search is on for a haven where the mind can daily in post-differential bliss.

some rather tedious repetitiveness between the different essays.

Nevertheless, any student of the history of thought in England, France and Germany, from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, will find much to ponder on and wonder at, in this work. The important role of theories about language in social, intellectual and cultural history is given the prominence it deserves, even though more technical approaches to linguistic structure receive short shrift.

Particularly telling is Aarsleff's account of the way Locke's views were distorted by his nineteenth-century detractors (and, hence, by Chomsky), as well as his convincing rejection of the simplistic empiricist/rationalist dichotomy in relation to language study. Here Aarsleff's approach reaps dividends, and we are shown how contemporary institutionalized prejudices serve to blinker readers of earlier works. It is, on the other hand, his sound historical scholarship that underlines the close connection between interest in the origin of language and universal grammar.

Aarsleff is perhaps on less familiar ground in describing the influences wrought on Saussure by his predecessors in France. As an Anglophone, Aarsleff is possibly not very far from being in the Romantic tradition of German linguistic scholarship. That the linguistic sign and the social status of language, already, are shadowed by Saussure's theories, is not a surprise to those nurtured on the

classic 1936 *Introduction to Romance Linguistics* by Iorgu Iordan and John Orr (which I had the privilege of updating in 1970). Indeed, in a long footnote contributed by John Orr (p. 294), the parallels in Saussure's and Bréal's thought are discussed, with the suggestion that Saussure focused a number of ideas that were "common property" among scholars of the time.

Perhaps Aarsleff's cautious reliance on documentary evidence does not allow enough scope for the rôle of oral transmission in the communication of ideas from one generation to the next. The predilection within Romance linguistics for "idealistic" culture-related language study, at the expense of narrow technical linguistics, is playfully owed much to a tacit consensus that goes back to Condillac and his fellows.

Moreover, Aarsleff does not stress enough the way that the French "school", as represented by Bréal, aimed at amalgamating the aims and methods of "scientific" linguistics with study of languages as social study of communication and as the expression of thought. Nevertheless, even though these essays underestimate the real achievements of the former approach, they deserve a wide audience for their excellent account of the latter.

Bertrand Russell's *A Bibliography of his Writings 1895-1976*, compiled by Werner Martin, has recently been published (332pp. Munich: Saur, £15.35/9.10/4.4. UK distributor: Library Association Publishing, 7 Ridgmont Street, London WC1).

# The bastion of the bourgeoisie

Roy Foster

R. B. McDOWELL and D. A. WEBB  
*Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952: An Academic History*  
580pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£35.  
0521 239311

Any Irishman knows instinctively what Trinity College represents, but most would be hard put to define it. It used to be seen as an outpost of West Britonism (and it was in this context that the last notable town-and-gown disturbances were conducted in 1945, with promiscuous burning of tricolours and Union Jacks after VE Day); the influx of British students after the war superficially reinforced the impression. But it was never "English" as uneasy incursions in Dublin like Archbishop Whateley tried to their cost; Lord Morris's definition of the Irish question as the problem attendant upon a quick-witted race being ruled by a slow-witted one was a characteristically "Trinity" remark. The fact that it came from a Gold Medalist committed to Toryism, Catholicism, the Erasmus Smith foundation, anti-British values, and flinty pessimism, all of which beliefs were articulated in a Galway brogue, takes us nearer the essence of the institution.

For its curious eclecticism can only be defined in terms of the Trinity mind - one of the constant elements in the organic development of the foundation over four hundred years. This combines a certain intellectual brutality with odd turns of finesse; it is capable of existentialist frivolity as well as gloomy realism; its style is laconic and classical rather than refined and baroque. It takes a real cerebral pleasure in exposing the meretriciousness of intellectual posturing, and sometimes intellectual productivity to this important but ephemeral pastime. It owes much to Puritanism - several of its early provosts were leading Puritan intellectuals - and this theme has persisted; the study of divinity has often been interpreted as that of theological controversy. Ulstermen have been disproportionately influential, from Provost Andrews in the eighteenth century to Provost McConnell in the twentieth. It could also be said that another lasting tradition of the Trinity mind is that of John Stearns, Professor of Physics in the 1860s, who gallantly attempted to combine the tenets of Stoicism with those of Christianity.

What the present study demonstrates is how the combinations and contradictions of the Trinity mind are reflected in the peculiar nature and even the status of the institution, by name both college and university, with no later foundations. (Despite recurring nineteenth-century theories: "a unitary body with collegiate and university aspects".) Links and comparisons are inevitably made with Oxford and Cambridge, but were early on diffused; a testy footnote dismisses those who have argued for a continuing Oxford influence. Academic developments in the eighteenth century were as haphazard as in England; over-emphasis on Trinity's early appointment of professorships in modern languages is put sharply in focus. In a less specific way, however, Trinity's peculiar cultural slant is shown to date from this era.

The disciplined luxury, rational thinking, elegant living and independence of spirit that characterized later Georgian society in Ireland were the qualities which were at that time prized beyond borders. It had, of course, its seamy side of drunken arrogance and spendthrift eccentricity, but this was more conspicuous in the country than in the capital, where the tolerance of society for such antics had its limits. In Dublin at least there could be seen again, after the lapse of one hundred years, a culture which was distinctively Irish and yet wholly European.

The ethos of the college partook of this. It was not aristocratic, then or later, even under the great Fely Hutchinson. College society was

"essentially middle-class". In 1830, thirty per cent of the students described their fathers as "gentlemen"; forty per cent were sons of clergy, eighteen per cent of tradesmen, eight per cent of farmers, and four per cent of clerks; the practice of awarding non-resident degrees diluted the sense of elitism further. By 1892, sons of "gentlemen" had declined to nine per cent. Nor was the political commitment of the college as obtrusive as might be assumed; it was Unionist but not Orange, and always made room for mavericks. Its position in Irish social life, during early nineteenth-century decay as much as eighteenth-century splendour, was focal; a recurrent refrain in this study celebrates by thumbnail sketches those Fellows who contributed more to Dublin's entertainment than to Ireland's education. While Trinity did not always deserve her sobriquet of "the silent sister", during certain periods (such as the early eighteenth century and the 1940s) academic productivity was notoriously slack. Nevertheless, the easy sense of superior ability remained, and the characteristic tone of civil arrogance: not long ago, candidates for lectureships who produced *curricula vitae* and copies of their learned articles were caustically referred to by at least one Senior Fellow as "those bloody pamphleteers".

In this at least, the authors of this book are uncharacteristic of their alma mater; both are prolific, and have for long been highly regarded by the academic community outside Ireland. Together, however, they form a fair approximation of a composite Trinity mind. D. A. Webb is an internationally renowned botanist whose breadth of interests include early works on College history; R. B. McDowell has written copiously and originally on Irish and British social and political history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their commitment to the college has been lifelong, they have known its life at all levels, and significantly, both have had far more contact with students than is normal for Trinity dons (Webb McDowell in his bravura performance as Junior Dean - a post which has driven at least one previous incumbent to suicide).

But their joint qualifications go further than this; in combination, the scientists' disconcertingly visceral directness of mind is blended with the shrewd eccentricity of the historian. The result is a history which is stylish,

perceptive, and, where necessary, delectably acidic. The structure is, as promised, resolutely "academic": the life of the college is reflected primarily in two themes. One is constituted by the lives, records and influence on the governing Board of the Provosts and Fellows; the other, by the development and ramifications of the curriculum. This can lead to occasional confusing recurrences and anticipations, while one wishes for the perceptive social generalizations to be pressed further than they often are. Subjects like the record and importance of Trinity Members of Parliament in the nineteenth century are also left tantalizingly to one side; and politics are generally kept resolutely within the walls, which avoids such interesting questions as how far Archbishop Walsh's threat to the college in 1886 was responsible for driving hitherto enlightened Unionists into the Orange spectrum. However, the dangers of a "cataloguing" approach are by and large avoided, by mechanisms like the insertion of a long chapter on the college in 1830, and the lightness of tone sustains a performance which, rare among college histories, can be read as narrative as well as reference. Moreover, because of the very nature of the subject, wider issues keep breaking in.

The reason lies partly in the material. Provosts and Fellows pass in an absorbing parade, surveyed by authors who have an ear for a telling anecdote and are not disposed to favourites (Bartholomew Lloyd and George Salmon providing two possible exceptions). Fellows like the brutally reactionary Joseph Carson could love the college "as Pericles loved Athena"; in 1880 the election of the astounding Anthony Traill was demonstrated in another manner when he offered to bribe Provost Lloyd into retirement with his own private income, in return for being himself appointed to the post (over the heads of twenty-five senior colleagues). There are many such byways prospected by the authors with convincing élan; they bring an equally stringent focus to bear on College finances, the much-troubled Trinity estates, and the vagaries of College architecture (where there is matter for regret, beyond the University Press, the Museum Building, and the surprisingly beautiful Front Square). The statistics of students, staff, income and expenditure are handled with clarity and force; some surprising patterns of intake and expansion appear, and the appendices on student numbers and college finances form a condensed

supplement of great value. The nineteenth-century commissions of enquiry which investigated Trinity are seen as demonstrating the college's essential vitality, efficiency and modernism.

Most of all, the curriculum is examined and evaluated in disconcerting detail (the fact that Trinity left the work of its own George Berkeley off the Moderation syllabus until 1910 is not missed). The spirit of successive ages is reflected in the prescribed reading on courses like ethics, as well as in the late development of a school of modern history; the eccentric progress of the Medical School, the avant-garde adoption of Engineering, and the foundation of impressive traditions in mathematics and astronomy are ably demonstrated. Much is done to explain why a Trinity education had the effect it did. "A graduate who went to Oxford or Cambridge for post-graduate study was apt to be alarmed at first by the cultured chatter he heard from the lips of men, not obviously more intelligent than himself, and to conclude that he must be a provincial ignoramus; but later on, when he found that when he imparted what he thought were pieces of standard textbook knowledge he was listened to with interest and respect, the perspective altered."

Throughout, *Trinity* is eschewed to an extent that may surprise those unaccustomed to the Trinity mind. The authors dismiss K. C. Bailey's earlier *History* as irritatingly Panglossian: "there is scarcely a note of criticism of anybody except Caesar Wilde". Their own work is not likely to suffer similar censure. Those who were lazy, or mediocre, are shortly categorized as such. A reforming Fellow is described as "campaigning against jobbery with the single-mindedness of a quarrelsome man for whom nobody is likely to make a job". The examining methods of a recent incumbent of the chair of Surgery receive short shrift ("if you were a Corkman, a rugby player or the son of a Freemason, then your prospects were good, but if you had other affiliations, or too heavily pigmented a skin, you needed to know your surgery very well indeed"). Names are named and postomitted; punned, in the most respectable Trinity tradition (Walter Sturle is enigmatically described as "the sort of professor of which every university ought to have one", but not more than one). Feline generalizations are inserted into the text ("young men dependent on seniority for promotion are always in favour of a retiring age, but for most of them there comes a time in later middle age when they begin to wonder

whether the arguments are quite as compelling as they thought"). The tone is no-nonsense, sometimes almost flip; sense is rated above sensibility throughout. It is, in a word, exactly right for the story it has to tell.

That story ends in 1952, with a palace revolution whereby the ancient and powerful Board which governed the college was finally forced to share some of its powers, and a new era commenced. The social nature of the college has changed since then, reflecting wider changes in Irish society; the "Kiplingist" life of students in the 1920s described by Webb and McDowell is redolent of a bygone age. In following the fortunes of the bastion of Dublin's Protestant middle class, this history incidentally paints a portrait of that class; not only the scholarly dynasties of Stokeses, Gwynnes and Haughtons, but also the vanished ethos of a society where, in the authors' words, the term "gentleman" covered "not only the owner of 1500 acres of good grazing land in Tipperary, but also the rentier living in Rathmines on £800 a year from Consols". This is in strong contrast, not only to agonized definitions of gentility across St George's Channel, but also to the *hampshire bourgeoisie* of Belfast. "All the time [gentleman] really meant was a man who did not have to get up in the morning if he did not want to; and in Ireland this implied wealth, great breeding nor very great wealth."

It is a vanished world, which mingled confident assumptions, blinkered expectations, and implicit Philistinism with considerable - even unique - intellectual attainments. The revolutions of twentieth-century Ireland inevitably affected the way all these characteristics had been reflected in Trinity College. Curiously, under the new dispensation Do Veiera proved a far better friend to the college than did the Fins Gael opposition; there are further ironies in the college's history since 1952 which are indicated but which lie outside this history's brief.

In a careful foreword, written while he was still Provost of the College, F. S. L. Lyons describes the authors as "to the right of centre" in their attitude towards recent phases of Trinity's evolution; this comes through clearly, and their own activities on the Board (as well as their well-known constitutional struggles of 1952) will be evaluated by the historians of the future who takes the tale into its next phase. But in providing an "academic history" which so often diversifies into a social and intellectual profile of an entire class and mentality, Professors Webb and McDowell have left a very bald act to follow.



"Couple walking, rue Terre Neuve, Meudon", a gouache by Gwen John (1875-1939) painted probably in the late 1920s, from an exhibition of her work at the Anthony d'Offoy Gallery, 9 Dering Street, New Bond Street, London W1, until August 22. Another gouache from the same exhibition is reproduced on page 749.

# The Prisoner of Treanda

In so much thickness how can we  
Dare propose some resonant philosophy  
Although Sarah the Keeper of Calligraphy  
Sees no difficulty in being bored  
Ask and ask and the deftness will return.

Cunning is the comfort, or persecution;  
Money and looks and there being too many persons.  
Rosalia rides into town on those versions  
Of natural skill they prided in the Marches.  
Afterwards, lovers feel the bite of midges.

Boillog over, it sets journoilists  
With lists of absolutely vital names to waste.  
The gods are serious, that's why they press  
Us to the grave with time: take seventy  
Ask each today or bore us with eternity.

So to the Collective: down on the firm  
They raise those public ghosts of ideal form,  
The first work of the world to name, a name:  
Tina and Torah flame warily mythic  
Among the shades of our Museum Gothic.

It's professional having fun; it has its rules.  
Stories from side-shows, news from the two Poles.  
Listen to the scholar: a headachy sea-mule.  
Caged and stared at, tried until it died.  
Tears at what we see are no fool's creed.

Peter Porter



# Conceptual connections

Arthur C. Danto

ANTHONY QUINTON

Thoughts and Thinkers

365pp. Duckworth. £28.

0 7136 1150 X

"On the whole it has been hard for British readers to gain a balanced and comprehensive view of this most intellectually serious and articulate version of Neo-Marxism". Anthony Quinton writes in an essay on the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, providing the missing balanced, comprehensive view. Various heights and deserts of philosophical and near-philosophical thought are here explored by Mr Quinton in the congenial role of intellectual traveller, recounting his adventures for the entertainment and edification of the home-bound reader, who is vicariously guided in thirty-three expeditions through some more or less exotic precincts of conceptual literature. The superbly equipped author is undoubted by the logical glacialities of Russell, Quine, Popper, C. I. Lewis, and the Polish logicians, but by the dense overgrowth and dark verbal rain-forests of Hegelian, Marxist, and Freudian expression. He tells us about Marshall McLuhan and Mortimer Adler. He even conducts us over the parched headlands of Victorian philosophical thought. Should the reader care to book passage to some challenging or improbable site, he will learn what gear to carry, and be armed with two or three good strong arguments with which to fight off the surly and uncouth natives. We are much in the debt of the enterprising editors who commissioned most of the essays reprinted in this valuable book, and I regret only that no one asked him to chart the *camargue* of Post-structuralist thought in France. I would rather read him on Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, or Lyotard than on Croom Robertson, say, the first editor of *Mind*, who has little interest for any save the most archivist temperament.

The analogy to *littérature de voyage* is neither inexact nor meant to be diminishing. The presumed audience for these essays is the general intellectual reader and not, for the most part, the specialist. Quinton is widening horizons, making distant things accessible, breaking down parochialisms, at the least bringing news. Each of the essays addresses something of 'general' intellectual interest, unless an exception is to be made of the virtuous account of British Idealism and Victorian philosophy, whose slumbering texts and dried and faded thoughts are held up for examination in an exercise of supererogatory historical zeal; while the narrator drops names it is safe to say have not been dropped often in the past century and perhaps were not often dropped when their bearers were alive. While perhaps the most original of the essays, I doubt whether this is a bit of history we must be condemned to repeat in case we are ignorant of it.

Divided somewhat arbitrarily into two main sections - "Thoughts" and "Thinkers" - the style of the essays is that of the *New York Review of Books*, perhaps a style Quinton helped to set, as eight of them originally appeared there. The division is arbitrary since almost any of the essays could as appropriately be assigned to either division. This is because, in presenting a topic - a "thought" - Quinton prefers to offer views defined against views actually held by identifiable historical or contemporary thinkers, while in presenting a thinker, he uses the opportunity to expose some larger thought in connection with which the thinker is, in his opinion, usefully understood. Because of his historical responsibility - and theoretical sensitivity, it is difficult to think of anyone writing today who quite matches this high level of what it is not an inquiry to designate philosophical journalism.

That even the trained and professional philosopher can, with as much profit as the general reader, get quite a lot from this essays (they are essays and not articles or papers and are always something more than technical papers) is a fact that follows

from Quinton's statement of his own mind and motives. He writes of his "concern for the openness of philosophy in the rest of intellectual life and to philosophy's own past". By implication philosophy has been closed and unhistorical, has been what Quinton feels it should not be: "a confined debate between a handful of specialists about a few topics of current and strictly professional concern". So it is more than a philosopher addressing non-philosophers. It is a philosopher exhibiting what he believes philosophy might really be. With this as subtext, the book asks to be perceived as something more than a collection of occasional pieces of intellectual geography.

Now historical urbanity and intellectual hospitality are virtues of the cultivated mind, and such publications as the NYRB or the TLS exist because there is widely acknowledged. Whether or not particular philosophers have shared these virtues, they have not been conspicuous in philosophical writing in the period in which Quinton came up and during which, given his interests and views of philosophy, he must have felt himself somewhat constantly on the defensive. In the 1950s and 1960s, philosophy seemed to set itself into a deliberately anti-historical posture correlatively with insisting upon its own autonomy as discipline. The two attitudes were mutually justifying. Most of the major philosophical movements of the middle generation of this century were concerned to formulate something philosophy

uniquely does, some programme of activity to be distinguished not only from what would be done by the sciences, but also from what had been done by the philosophers of the past, who were deeply confused as to the nature of their work. To study them would be a wasted effort, unless one had a taste for pathologies of thought, or a charitable impulse to redeem those few figures who might have hit upon some salvageable view. "Doing philosophy" was sniffily set off from talking about the past, or doing anything else but it, whatever it might be. Insularity is the obverse of iconoclasm, and philosophers came to care about philosophers as philosophers and about nobody else much at all. In this as in much else, philosophy was in the vanguard of the anti-historical and self-sufficient attitudes more violently and more grossly enacted in the name of the Cultural Revolution or the Counter-culture a decade later.

It is safe to say that the charms of the old iconoclasm have tarnished, mbbing Quinton of a virile target. But a question remains as to what the interest of philosophers in their own history or the disciplines of others should be. Even in that period of isolationism, it might have been plain that there is an internal connection between the way philosophy perceives its past and the way it perceives itself. So the question of what our relationship to history or "the rest of intellectual life" should be cannot be separated from the question of what we are. And this, I think, nobody really

knows. "We still do not know how philosophical texts should be interpreted," writes one of philosophy's best contemporary historians, Dieter Henrich, at the beginning of a study of Kant. But this is because we do not know what philosophy itself is, for all the brave efforts at self-definition we have lived through. In his preface, Quinton discloses that he does not think "that there are any eternal truths about either the actual or the ideal relationship between philosophy and other sorts of intellectual life or its own history which are substantial enough to be worth trying to formulate very precisely". But this is tantamount to saying that there are no eternal truths about philosophy itself, or perhaps to take it as an eternal truth that about philosophy there is no final truth to tell.

This is certainly what comes through the essays. There is no central organizing vision of philosophy or in philosophy. Or there is simply the performative definition, which is the philosophical equivalent of voting with one's feet, that philosophy is generally intellectual criticism, to be governed by clarity and good sense. Clarity and good sense are great virtues, and they are virtues of this book. But Quinton lacks an original view of his discipline which would make for an excitement it is perhaps also his belief that we are better off without.

As intellectual criticism it is very fair though not, of course, altogether non-partisan. Certain of the figures brushed

up are clearly objects of Quinton's admiration. Hobbes's "intellectual pride is a timely reminder of what is possible to the human mind". Russell and Popper and C. I. Lewis are treated with qualified, Quine with almost unqualified respect. Hegel is too important historically to ignore and too out of bounds finally to accept, and he takes a good many sneers. G. E. Moore, whom one would have thought Hegel's antithesis, and who occupies the somewhat infrequent role of a saint in contemporary philosophy, has a ladeisful of scorn faced with irony poured over him. The discussion of egalitarianism is uniquely impatient and not up to Quinton's characteristic level of exposition and criticism. The only topic I think wholly beyond his considerable grasp is the artistic avant-garde he discusses to an essay on cultural elitism, where the tone is that of an outraged milord pretending to a certain distant, chilly amusement at the shenanigans of aesthetic wogs. These are minor departures.

Almost as a trait of character, Quinton takes the positions he opposes seriously, if not always on their own terms, representing them accurately enough to excuse his taste for pedagogical mockery. He is a natural instructor, and his relish for making the difficult clear, the obscure palpable, and the fantastic even plausible, is ingratiating. For the kind of thinking and reading for which models are possible, these are models of reading and thinking. If you cannot be drunk, this is the way to be sober.

## The isness business

Thomas Baldwin

C. J. F. WILLIAMS

What is Existence?

359pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford

University Press. £17.50.

0 19 82429 0

From the very first stirrings of philosophical speculation, philosophers have debated the nature of being, or existence. In this century philosophers of otherwise diverse as Heidegger and Moore have agreed that questions about the nature of Being, or what there really is, are the fundamental questions of philosophy. Within the analytic tradition of philosophy, one approach to these questions has predominated, according to which existence is not a property of individual objects at all. It makes no sense, to say "Margaret Thatcher exists". Instead, it is maintained, the only way in which the concept of existence can be properly employed is in nanking general claims, such as "There tigers exist", which can be understood as predicating, not existence, but instantiation of the property of being a time tiger. Actually, this is not quite how such general existential claims would stand: they would be understood within this tradition; rather, the logician's concept of a quantifier is introduced, and it is claimed that the use of

"exist" in "Tame tigers exist" is captured by the use of the existential quantifier in "For some  $x$ ,  $x$  is a tame tiger"; hence Quine's famous dictum that "existence is what the existential quantifier expresses".

It is this orthodoxy which C. J. F. Williams expounds and defends. After describing how Hume and Kant roughly anticipate it, he explains in the context of his theory of natural numbers; and throughout his long book Williams adverts to Fregean themes to defend his position. The central claim he seeks to establish is that existence is not a property of individual objects. In support of this claim he advances three arguments: (i) If existence were a property of individual objects it would be a property of all of them but no genuine properties can be thus universal; (ii) If existence were a property of individual objects, denials of existence, such as "Margaret Thatcher does not exist" would make sense; but they do not; (iii) we have no real use for sentences such as "Margaret Thatcher exists".

These are pretty unpersuasive arguments: Moore observed long ago that since some true existential claims are contingent, modal considerations can (*contra* (ii)) give good sense to positive existential claims. In "Though Margaret Thatcher exists, she might not have done" and to negative ones (*contra* (iii)) (as in

"One can coherently suppose that Margaret Thatcher does not exist"), and (*contra* (i)) suggest that in some way existence is not universal (as in "Some things which might exist don't").

Williams certainly attempts to counter this line of criticism, and similar criticisms which invoke the straightforward use of existence in temporal contexts ("Socrates no longer exists") and in indirect speech ("Margaret Thatcher does not know that Christopher Williams exists"). In each case his strategy is to allow that these complex existential claims make sense, but to deny, surface grammar notwithstanding, that existence is here predicated of an individual object within them; thus he produces paraphrases of them in which, he maintains, what they say is said without any appearance of predicating existence of an individual.

This strategy is deficient both in general conception and detailed execution. The general problem is that one can extract complex predicates of individual objects from Williams's paraphrases which, it seems, must express existence if the paraphrases are correct: the points of detail arise from Williams's liberal use of ad hoc constraints and contentious extra assumptions - such as that for each individual object there is a property which necessarily applies to it and to it alone (this seems to entail the identity of indiscernibles). The result, in my case, was that being left unconvinced by Williams's arguments, I was all the more inclined to take the view he rejects.

Two features of his arguments at this point, and elsewhere in the book, call for special comment. First there is the question of his attitude to one common account of existence, as the property of being the same as something. The merit of this account is that it both preserves the point of the thought that "existence is what the existential quantifier expresses" and itself constitutes a derivative property of individual objects. Williams officially rejects this suggestion on the grounds that it requires the assumption that identity is a relation between an individual and itself, an assumption which he claims without argument to be false. Not only would one expect such an important (and anti-Fregean) claim to be supported by some arguments: it is also disconcerting to find that identity, as a relation between an individual and itself, plays an important role in his

account of modal and tensed existential claims, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that in these arguments he does identify existence with being the same as something.

Secondly, there is the question of the significance to be attached to the use of one logical notation over any other. Throughout his book Williams employs Polish notation, whose distinctive feature is that it requires no brackets to mark distinctions of logical scope; this makes it easy for computers to read (they usually use the idiom known as "reverse Polish") but hard for most humans to read (it is notable that when Williams's formulae stretch right across a page he adds brackets to aid comprehension). Nothing of substance, one might think, hinges on choice of notation; but Williams claims that because of the rule about the dispensability of brackets Polish notation has the merit of revealing that predicate operators cannot be distinguished from sentential ones, and thus that there is no distinction between the internal and external negation of propositions in which a predicate is attached to a name. This claim is an important one, since just such a distinction with respect to negative existential claims is a familiar feature of the views of those who allow that existence is a property of individuals. What is startling in Williams's position is the claim that something as important as this could hang on a choice of notation. In fact, of course, it doesn't; one can just use different letters, or constructions, to distinguish sentential from predicate operators.

I have so far concentrated on Williams's central claim about existence, that it is not a predicate of individual objects, and I have sufficiently indicated why I think that he does not establish it. In the latter part of the book he ranges over a wide variety of topics in logic, and his treatment of them is to some extent separable from his central claims about existence. For example, he argues that we can make good sense of the use of quantifiers which bind sentential variables, as in "For some  $p$ , Williams believes that  $p$ ", and on this point I agree with him, though I doubt if a sceptic on this matter would be persuaded by Williams's discussion of it. Among these latter chapters, that on fiction and possible worlds seemed to me especially interesting and well-expressed. I wish the rest of the book had been the same.

## Dead Skunk

I buried a skunk in the garden.  
He was beautiful, dead on the lawn.  
Nobody knows whether a dog or poison  
Left him those in the hogning of Spring.

I purposely made his grave shallow  
To keep him as near to life as possible,  
Just barely under the stuff of the earth.  
We should not bury death too deeply.

But keep it as it with us,  
This was a beautiful of God's creatures,  
Striped body, black and white,  
A white, conclusive tail.

I put a cock over the place  
As if to say resolutely  
I honor your life, I mark your death,  
And know little of either.

Richard Eberhart

## Interested Party - by Russell Davies

The launching of *Larkin at Sixty*! It must have been grand to be there. Did they set out the spread in a bicycle-shed? Or a train, or a graveyard, or where? Were the invites on library-tickets? Was He wearing His M.C.C. tie? Were there Ewart and Heaney (and Blesney?) and Wain? Was there actual scotch, or did Kingsley complain That a superabundance of soddlog champagne Just made a man wide, not high?

No, surely they held it at Fehers. There must be a room for these do's, A normal-type, formol-type Elliot Room, with a couple of tables for booze. Month will have ordered some flowers (and probably none'll arrive), But there, on a trolley, symbolical scraps Colled twiggies and toasties and savoury maps Are waiting to fuel the talented traps Of Andew, and John, and Clive.

And here is the Poet arriving, some minutes ahead of the crowd.  
(For all that he wouldn't, you can't say he couldn't; it's fiction, for crying out loud.)  
Ho strolls, with his hands in his pockets, as though he were kicking up leaves,  
Then moons to the window and watches the birds  
(Their singing so pleasingly barren of words)  
And waits for the hush of toppers and turds  
All nursing their private poeas.

In fact, though, they've treated him kindly. The book's an "agreeable romp".  
(But it hasn't the tone of a Wingly Manone attacking the Tar Paper Stomp...)  
There's nothing remotely disgraceful, and no one to ban from the blinge.  
Just part of a chapter is crap to the core -  
The one by that ectoc chap, bit of a bore,  
Who looks like an owl and whines like a saw,  
The one from *Beyond the Fringe*.

The joint, within minutes, is jumping. Cocophony builds by degrees.  
(If Robert's have neighbours, they're kept from their labours by ravling occasions like these.)  
Now post must holier to post; and Larkin must mime his holies -  
To the utter enchantment of Christopher Ricks  
Who loves, above all things, the way meaningless mix.  
"Did Larkin mean 'Hell-o' or 'Hull-o'?" (He licks  
His lips, as an essay grows.)

The room is a mass reputation, a coistering riot of names,  
As Arms and Conquest engage in a soog-fest and Porter talks daughters with James;  
Now Gavin's describing a chyme-scheme; and John is enGrossed with his host,  
Comparing the ethics of zengms and pun;  
While, hoooured and old, in a circle of sun,  
John Betjerman sits (for his Motion is Dunn)  
Responding to every toast.

By the way, were some losels invited? Have loblollies joined the elect?  
Well who are those others, bespectacled brothers, it seems, in some spaces of aect?  
Not lecturers, surely? Or lapers? (Their whispsers are tricky to catch)  
And surely not louts, you can tell by their dress:  
Those trouses, though shiny, ara fraah from the press...  
They must be the bloody librarians! Yes,  
A typical horn-rimmed batch.

Let's focus again upon Larkin: a figure that he'd call "unfair".  
Up close, and *in toto*, he's not like his photo - you got no idea of the scale.  
He's higger, and saanningly louder; alarmingly holstarous eyes.  
His forehead's more favoured with bumps than with cnts;  
Nose-pendulous lobes (and a touch of the gut);  
And cheeks that are boggy (for hoarding the nuts  
Of forelgners, poofs and spies).

Too risky to say what he stands for - hut there he unblinkingly stando,  
Like a lighthouse, mooybe, ovelooking the sea on behalf of indifferent sands...  
A gaze on the lookout for salvage, for what can be plucked from the night:  
For evorant feeling, where God used to be;  
If not for the Tree of Life, life in a tree;  
For "I don't kid anyone, least of all me";  
For keeping The End in sight;

For childlessness, Hardy, the Seasons; for everything verging on dull;  
For catching of happiness; scooning of crappiness; lexical meppiness; Hull;  
For Henry 'Red' Allen and Condon; for Ribblesdale rather than Rome;  
For loneliness roiled to the purpose of leisure;  
For losses collected like personal treasures;  
For England, and Beauty (hut not beyond measure,  
And not very much for Home.)

Alas for the technical poacher; from Larkin there's little to steal.  
No standardised metres, or thoughts that repeat as resource and afflatus congeal.  
No personal coda-words (well, hardly; you couldn't call 'toad' a secondito)  
So the nearest we got to those twitchas and tics  
That critics call characteristics (or tricks)  
Is the negative prefix - says Christopher Ricks,  
In which he is not unright.

It's tempting to break up the party - they lurch off in search of some food -  
And to leave Philip Larkin alone in the dark in a parody Larkinesque mood.  
But having immersed him, unbidden, in hoggerol-moggerol versos,  
The least I can do is give over, dearst,  
Withdraw while he's still got a drink in his fist,  
And leave him to get Nobel-prizely plaud  
(And nuts to the looming hoars).

Were you ever trapped in the Buffet, at Doncaster, Preston or Brum?  
A fly in your custard, while round you were mustered assorted mad cripples and scum?  
This almost traditional feeling: intolerances faced with despair.  
How great an achievement to make it your theme!  
Not only to say "Things are worse than they seem"  
But to shape into beauty the life that you deem  
Unfinished, unline, unfair.

*Larkin at Sixty*, edited by Anthony Thwaite (148pp. Faber, £7.95, 0 571 11878 X) was launched at Faber's, 3 Queen Square, London, W.C1 on May 24.



# Laughter and lamentations

S. S. Prawer

## HEINRICH HEINE

Complete Poems  
Translated by Hal Draper  
1,032pp. Boston: Sahrkamp/Ansel  
Distributed in the UK by Oxford  
University Press. £20.  
0 19 815751

In two important respects this weighty volume keeps the promise of its title. It is indeed *complete* in the present state of research allows, containing not only all Heine's lyrics, mock-epics, satires and occasional poems, but also his two verse-dramas. No English version past or present can boast a comparable coverage: we are even given, in a helpful section of Notes, translations of important variant readings and emendations. Hal Draper's renderings may claim to be *modern* in the sense that Louis Untermeyer's were in an earlier day; they make free use of twentieth-century idiom but are not afraid of introducing archaisms when conventionally "poetic" effects are required. Heine himself, it will be remembered, was fond of playing the archaic and "poetic" against the contemporary and offhand.

These translations may be called English however, only in a strictly limited sense – for a successful reading can only be achieved if the British reader cultivates a transatlantic accent. He must always pronounce "nichte" as "nitch", stress "müsstische" and "revellie" on the first and "frontier" on the second syllable, and be prepared to let "quarters" rhyme with "orders" and "adverses" with "savors". He will find old ladies "putting hexes" onto young ones or baking "loaf cakes" (whatever that is) for them. A gift of "cookies" is met with praise for "the cats". Mr Draper's Heine searches for a "dizzy dame", finding that it's "just no go" as

he is driven here and there "for fair". The Romans are credited with "emorous mammas" (and it's not mothers that are meant); Dame Venus asks to be "beat up"; Phaedon "his solar buggy"; angels are "for real"; a former discipline has "gotten free" of Goethe. When people are called "dumb" they must be presumed foolish, not silent; the "ass" which plays a prominent part in several of the poems is not the kind that is grey and has long ears.

All this would seem fair enough in a version principally intended for the American market; it can even turn into a delightful game when we catch the devil who uses Göttingen student-slang in Heine's original poem mouthing one of Harvard's favourite Humphrey fogart catch-phrases in Draper's version. It becomes objectionable, however, when such transpositions destroy Heine's carefully judged social tone and speech-register. "If you're on intimate terms with demes" is not at all the same thing as "Ist du vertraut Umgang mit Demen", nor is "I yearn for you so painfully / Until I'm nearly daff" an adequate equivalent of "Ich sehne mich so sehr nach dir, / Ich rufe nach dir, ich schmachte".

But let us return to the good news. Draper's translation deserves praise not only for its completeness, but also for its faithful adherence to Heine's stanza-patterns and rhyme-schemes. It has not proved possible, of course, to keep exactly to the poet's carefully judged alternation of accented and unaccented line-ending. "Bisyllabic or feminine rhymes", the Foreword rightly tells us, "are more congenial to German verse than in English"; but ones or baking "loaf cakes" (whatever that is) for them. A gift of "cookies" is met with praise for "the cats". Mr Draper's Heine searches for a "dizzy dame", finding that it's "just no go" as

intention comes across splendidly in stanzas like "The canon opened his fat face: / Love must not be coarse, you know, / It's best for the health in that case." A young girl lispeth, "Whyso?" though the social ambience would be better caught, I think, if "young lady" were substituted for "young girl" in the last line. Stanzas like "The sea sinks into the ocean, / A last ray flashes above, / And points with a golden finger / To where I lost my love" reproduce the rhythm and thought-sequence of their original so faithfully that they could easily be sung, without distortion of vocal line, to the notes Schubert fitted to their German original.

Imagery and movement of the famous "sea-gull" poem from *Seraphine* have been perfectly caught in the lines "Dear soul, dear fugitive spirit, / There's fear and pain in your cry – / You are too near the water! / The moon hangs far on high." Draper has as pungent a way with rhymed insult as his original: "A fat cigar stuck in the face, / Thy go their way with stolid phlegm; / No doubt they have good stomachs too – / If only one could stomach them!" and his punch-lines again and again match those of Heine himself: "Truth's disappearing from the planet; / Gone is the faithfulness of yore, / Dogs fawn, and stink as much as ever, / But they're not faithful any more." The poem about the Jew-like singing songs / Of freedom without question: "It spiced up his drink a bit / And also aids digestion." Karl Marx, I feel sure, would have been delighted by Draper's rendering of a favourite quotation from *Germany. A Water's Tale*: "Yes, sugar peas for everyone / Piled high upon the barrows! / The heavens we can safely leave / To the angels and the sparrows", though someone unfamiliar with the original might wonder what a "sugar pea" might be.

Th more menacing tones that occasionally invade Heine's poetry ring out convincingly in the English version of *Die schlesischen Weber*: "The shuttle flies, the loom creaks loud, / Night and day we weave your shroud." / Old Germany, at your shroud we sit, / We're weaving a threefold curse in it, / We're weaving, we're weaving! And the dark world view of some of the late poems is conveyed without loss of force in lines like "Heroes' lives will bleed away, / And the worst will win the day", or in the rendering of a little poem prefixed to Section II of the *Romanzero*:

Happiness is a giddy gift  
And always dished out to stay;  
She pets your head, gives you a whiff,  
Kisses you quick, and flies away.

But Lady sorrow now! Don't worry,  
She's just the very opposite:  
She holds you fast – she's in no hurry –  
She sits down by your bed to knit.

Mr Draper is at his best when he trusts his author; but that trust does not invariably extend far enough. Take the mock-epic poem called *Klagelied eines alten Mannes* (Lament of an old man) in one of the few recorded comments on his own metrical practice Heine has carefully explained why the third line in each stanza of that poem should have a foot less than the first; yet in Draper's version line 3 is the same length as line 1. When Heine, to one of his most

powerful last poems, suddenly abandons rhyme for assonance ("Handvoll" – "Antwort"), Draper scorns the near-perfect equivalent English offers him ("handful") – "snower" in favour of the phonologically heterogeneous line-ends "cold day" – "answer". Some changes are, of course, necessitated by the compulsions of English rhyme and rhythm; but there remain quite a few that cannot be explained in this way. Why should King Ludwig's "Lapidarstil" be called "gem-like" rather than "lapidary"? Why should the sub-title of *Atta Troll* remain as explicitly Shakespearean as that of *Germany. A Water's Tale*? Why, if Heine's medieval knights bore true faith "in dem Herzen", should they best it "upon their breast" in Draper? Why, when Heine tells us specifically that King Charles I is slitting in "a charcoal-burner's hut" (a covert allusion to the *carbouant* of Heine's day), should Draper place him in "a simple workman's hut" without any rhythmic or rhyming gain? Why, when Heine, for purposes of exotic colouring or allusion to his own Jewish heritage, introduces Hebrew forms into his German text ("Jeruscholajim" in *Atta Troll*, "Mausche" in one of the Meyerbeer satires) should Draper normalize these forms to "Jerusalem" (instead of "Yerushalaim") and "Moses" (instead of "Moese")? Why when a Jewish figure refers to his son's hunched back ("hober Rücken") should the translator drag in a crude Jewish stereotype by making him speak, instead, of his son's "hooked nose" which, allegedly, "shows the breed"? Heine was quite capable of using such stereotypes for his own purposes; but there can be no justification for introducing them without his sanction.

As generous acknowledgments in the Foreword make clear, Draper has profited by the advice of two distinguished professors of German literature in American universities. This has undoubtedly helped him to avoid the kind of misunderstanding of Heine's words which so often mars translations of his writings into other languages; yet he misses the point occasionally. "Den arsten besten Mann" is by no means the same thing as "the first good man". "Wir bitten einen Nero jetzt / Statt Landesvater drei Dutzend" opposes the sheer stature of the monstrous Nero to the mediocrity of petty German sovereigns, who may or may not be quite good-natured – a contrast which is destroyed by the rendering "Only one and not three dozen Neros". "Gar liebe Geschöpfchen und Tröpfchen" insults the Swabian poets by patronizingly patting their heads – a much more effective way, I think, than the crudely insulting "How the nimbles fumble and mumble" which is here offered as an equivalent. "Wir treiben jetzt Familienglück" accurately rendered in Alister Elliot's recent translation of the *Lazarus* poems as "We're busy with domestic bliss", becomes the feebly conventional "For family happiness we yearn" in the Draper version. In the same way Elliot's "the scent of those rejected flowers" is far closer to "der verschmilteten Blumen Duft" than Draper's ambiguous "ganitive

metaphor "the fragrant flowers of my disdain."

Natural word and phrase accentuations have often to be wrenched, when reading Draper's translations, if a line is to make metrical or rhyming sense. One finds oneself forced to read "Soool! I'll follow readier", "dragons and vampires", "They made a great big to-do", "I tried to use and stand up", and "furn contours", without any warrant in the original. Some lines defy reading aloud – try "Upon your heart I saw the serpent feed; / I saw, my love, how wretched you are indeed!" The only way to make that last line the equivalent of Heine's "Ich sah, mein Lieb, wie sehr du elend bist" is to reduce "wretched" to a monosyllabic Procrustean solution that will find few friends on this side of the Atlantic.

Mr Draper allows himself occasional descents into Denoite-Dachshund language ("This they will understand never"; "When I hear Hungary's name outcried") and offers as translation of Heine's idiomatic and pellucid German such infelicities as "In dream I saw a man . . ." (might not "A dream showed me a man" be better?) or "I seem to hear a distant ringing / Of watchmen's horns . . ." Even in America, one would have thought, "horns" hardly "ring". Some famous lines are reduced to gibberish. Are we seriously being offered "From older times it flings out / A beckoning white hand" as a translation of "Aus alten Märchen winkt es / Hervor mit welscher Hand", or is Draper having us on? There are similar horrors elsewhere: "But he awoke and thrust it deep / In Caesar's breast the dagger thud"; "Grant that in this mighty temple / How the stars are inconvenient"; "Old Moses has long gone to potting"; "I have heard of going to pot, but this is ridiculous. If that is the price we have to pay for rigid adherence to Heine's verse-patterns, it is too steep a hill."

In poems whose effect depends on euphony and economy, tautology seems particularly unwelcome. Examples of padding, however, are found in several places: "For millions now, as brothers / We've borne with each other an age", for instance, or "mad dream of mine / That once tormented my own heart". Comparison with other translations underlines this; as equivalent of "Ich bin zu Grund gerichtet" (*Zum Lazarus* 7), Elliot's quiet "I've come to grief" proves much more effective, in its context, than Draper's insistent "That you've destroyed me through and through". One regrets especially the introduction of Ohs and Ahs into lines that have no such exclamations in the original: "Du bist wie eine Blume" becomes "Oh, you are like a flower", "Ich bin ein altes schönes Väterlein" appears as "Oh, once I was a flower", "Liederling", and "Oh, your so-w-white lily fingers", is not Aaron Kramer's "You're lovely as a flower" preferable to Draper's breathy emotioalism?

These are but some of the complaints that can be and will be made about this new version of Heine's poetry. But Draper's labour of love – begun, he tells us, in 1948, and finished in the mid-1970s – has not been in vain: for no one can read his way through this book without gaining a powerful impression of the variety and unity of the poet to whose work Draper has consecrated some twenty-five years of his life. Heine's calculated simplicities, his self-conscious and often self-parodying sentimentality, his play with a wide variety of personae, his powerful blending of accusation, laughter, and lament, again and again ring out loud and clear. It is important to remember that Draper's version has the deficiencies of this review has attempted to point out, so that we do not lay them to the charge of his originals. The translator will, no doubt, want to make some revisions in future releases. Once we have made this necessary allowance, however, we can surely accept this book gratefully as an approximation to the work of the poet so well described in its Foreword: "poisig, declamating, musing, complaining, accusing, lying, loving, fustig, bating, defaming, begging, horifying, delighting in other words, busy being Heine."

## Amsterdam

Money was evil:  
Therefore he locked up large sums of it in gold,  
In ships and warehouses,  
Polders and dikes.  
To hold back the Leviathan and the flood,  
To stop it corrupting poor people  
Who might have bought luxuries,  
Drugs and whores,  
Or wasted their lives enjoying themselves.

His capital has grown.  
Where he used to sit at night in his room  
With no curtain drawn  
To show next-door neighbours  
His gloomy interior had nothing evil to hide.  
A girl from the Far East with her breasts bare  
Sit-stoned in red light  
And a strange greedy flood  
Leeches into her parlour with money to burn.

Richard Murphy

# Discreet charms and eternal squiddities

Adam Mars-Jones

## CARLOS FUENTES

Distant Relations  
Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden  
225pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.  
0 436 16764 6

In his new novel Carlos Fuentes sets out to combine the virtues of Proust and Borges, and ends up with those of H. P. Lovecraft; *Distant Relations* is a B-movie squandering as an art film.

The story straddles the Old World and the New, just as the style seeks to accommodate both realism and prose-poetry. One luncheon the narrator, unnamed till the book's penultimate section, meets an old friend, the octogenarian Comte de Brany, in the

dining room of the Automobile Club de France. Through the afternoon and evening, Brany tells the story of his recent extraordinary experiences in Mexico and Paris.

Having met in Mexico a congenial father and son called Hugo and Victor Heredia, Brany invited them to stay with him in Paris. His guests turned out to play the game of looking up their namesakes in the telephone directory wherever they happened to be, and sometimes visiting these far-flung Heredias. There was a Victor Heredia in the Paris phone-book, who lived in Eoghien-les-Bains, and Brany, entering into the spirit of the game, drove out with young Victor to pay him a visit.

Brany crashed his car, and was forced to spend some days with the French Heredia in order to recuperate.

## Dolphin love

Bill Buford

Ted Mooney

Easy Travel to Other Planets  
279pp. Cape. £6.95.  
0 224 02931 2

Melissa is a marine biologist asked to spend three weeks alone studying a male dolphin. Towards the end of her stay, she is surprised by how intimate she and her subject feel when together. Not only do they succeed in communicating with remarkable ease – chuckling and squeaking until way past bed-time – but, more important, Melissa finds she is taking to water with unrestrained glee.

For his part, Peter, the dolphin, accepts it as perfectly natural that this otherwise undolphinlike creature should behave in quite a dolphinlike manner and that, quite reasonably, he should soon feel such a strong dolphinlike attraction to her. It takes

some time, however, for Peter to get this particularly powerful feeling across, and Melissa is not able to understand it until the last day of her study. It is then, after some carefully protracted foreplay conducted in the shallow end of the upstairs swimming pool, that Melissa and Peter unite in a moment of delicate aquatic congress.

It is difficult not to regard Ted Mooney's cool first novel as something of a literary publicity stunt: the book that manages to pull off what no one else has got around to trying. It is also not terribly difficult to dismiss it as merely a publicity stunt: the book (but pull off what no one else could be bothered with. But both criticisms disregard the strangely ironic world into which "dolphin love" intrudes.

When Melissa finally leaves Peter, she re-enters an urban centre mesmerized by television culture, in which all emotion is trivialized to the level of television drama. The streets are crowded with people collapsing in pain from a few epidemic of "information sickness" (deliriously

narrative can literally shock his reader. Nor does he go in much for moral shock, the *frisson* of contemplating the unmentionable. Two stories about sex, for example, "Would You Do It for a Penny?" and "How's the Night Life on Cissida?", are respectively a seduction fantasy and an extended smutty joke: routine, even sexist. He is more often anything than shocking; but he can certainly be personal.

The centrepiece of this collection is "All the Lies that are My Life", twenty thousand words of fictional self-exposure for which Ellison adopts his unusual expedient of two personae: a rich, flamboyant SF writer and his somewhat less manic old friend, who narrates the story of the writer's death and peculiarly blinding bequests. It takes restraint, not just to do this at all, but to do it well, and Ellison does it well enough. If the theme is how the dead actually do possess the living, the theme of "Shatteredday", whose protagonist is also subdivided, is how the living possess the dead. "Shatteredday" begins like "All the Lies", in a characteristic flurry of wisecracks, then quiets and ends somberly. It is the more effective story. In fact, and I doubt that this is only a prejudice of national character, Ellison's most successful and disturbing stories are those which are least exhibitionist, least couched by his preferred aggressive manner: "Count the Clock that Tells the Time", about the flimbo of human ineffectuality; "All the Birds Come Home to Roost", in which an undeserving man is revisited by the women he has ever coupled with, one by one, in reverse order; "Optimism", a suicide hallucination; and "The Other Eye of Polyphemus", a graceful parable of Purgatory and a comforter who cannot identify his own desires.

This last is Ellison writing as Hemingway, not as fireworks; no trumpets, and it is the most accomplished and powerful piece in the book. Surely there is significance in that?

Ellison developed the habit of introducing in *Dangerous Visions*, his anthology of "taboo-breakage" science fiction, published in 1967. Even then many of the stories seemed somehow less tremendous than his fanfare and alarms proclaimed: something similar is the case now. Ellison does not employ suspense and tension, a spring-loaded punchline, or any of the devices by which a

During this period it became clear that the French Heredia was a supernatural creature intent on capturing the Mexican Victor and taking him back in time (or out of it altogether) to be a companion for his own son André. This theory was confirmed for Brany when he came upon Victor and André engaged in mystical sex in the crashed Citroën.

My embarrassed summary takes the plot a little past its half-way point; far enough, anyway, to suggest that the story is a preposterous mess, claiming to explore the high themes of heredity, identity and memory while allowing its author to overdo on smugness and flabby Gothicism.

While the author basks, the reader flowers. Fuentes loads his text with allusions and fireworks, without ever producing a memorable phrase or a

disconnected speech, apparent disorientation, and the desire to touch everything for which the only cure is complete memory elimination. Others than the healthy ones – cluster in groups and talk excitedly about the discovery of a new emotion; everyone agreeing that "the old standby" were getting a little showpuff these days, what with the proliferation of confessional therapies, advertising agencies, TV personalities.

Personal life is no salvation. At the airport she is met by Jeffrey, the man she lives with. Her arrival interrupts the affair he is conducting with an attractive blonde named Clarice, and momentarily delays the affair he contemplates beginning with Melissa's best friend, Nikki. Nikki, also at the airport, is about to fly to California for her sixth abortion, even though she feels she ought to keep this baby for the man she believes she may want to marry and who may or may not be the father. Eventually freed from both Jeffrey (who rejoins Clarice) and Nikki (who continues in her indecision), Melissa visits her mother, who, even while dying of cancer, is about to have a "short-lived" affair with a man who may or may not leave the woman with whom he has been living for most of his life. Melissa has some trouble taking all this in: and can you blame her?

*Easy Travel to Other Planets* attempts to negotiate a fine line between being a very funny book (which it isn't) and soap opera melodrama of the worst sort – a kind of Coronation Street transferred to the young and trendy of Manhattan. But quick to melodrama, where sexual betrayal has dramatic potential because sexual intimacy matters, there is, in Mooney's novel, no sense of betrayal or melodrama if only because nothing matters, to any significant way, at all. Sexuality is merely a unit of trade, and orgasm is reduced to a kind of bizarre social greeting. In the easy world of easy travel, the most agitated emotion derives from an exaggerated form of jet lag. It is entirely in keeping with the novel's laid-back tone that when Melissa announces that she and the dolphin are lovers ("and I don't use the term 'lovers' lightly"), Jeffrey wanders into the kitchen with a cool, mellow grace and, rolling a joint with the headlines of the *New York Times*, can respond with only a mild curiosity: "Well, who seduced whom then?"

Ultimately, however, *Easy Travel to Other Planets* is dominated by its quacking submarine sensuality. It smokes, inevitably, of that peculiar and remarkably un-erotic, post-war tradition of "imaginative sexuality": the tradition that, beginning with Philip Roth's demonstration in *Portnoy's Complaint* that not even the contents of the family refrigerator are safe from violation, has included exotic displays involving brothers and sisters, dead mothers, household tools, and virtually all animals – domesticated, grating, and predatory – found on land. Mooney has figured out how to reach the animals in the sea, but in most recent respects, so much cleverness seems such a waste: it is evident that submerged by all this dolphin love – this Disneyland Flipper-meets-philosopher-king – there is a very serious novel trying to surface.

vivid image. Brany's Spanish servants are introduced with a comparison apiece: ashen José looks "like a figure in a Zurbarán painting", while florid Florencio resembles "an exhausted jail-drawing as Fuentes provides in this case; the two phrases, which insist on their own precision but convey no information, are repeated word for word a hundred pages later, when the servants reappear.

The infelicities of the book are compounded by a translator with a heavy hand and a tin ear, whose difficulties with English grammar are cruelly highlighted by every long sentence. Take this passage, for example: "My friend felt that in the same way the moon slowly ascended from the familiar garden, from secret moisture between the oaks and birches rising after a long summer's absence to celebrate the return of the abundance of autumn when the woods are sovereigns of their moribund bounty. In the same way the real sounds of the landscape he was observing with such mournful and protracted delight were born in him."

Remove from this the pendulous qualifications and the faltering rhythms, and you are left with a frankly defective sentence: "My friend felt that in the same way A, in the same way B. This is not how the English language,

on its good days, expresses co-relative clauses.

Stilted, snobbish, charmless and elephantine, *Distant Relations* is unlikely to make any converts for Carlos Fuentes. In spite of its dedication to Buñuel and its insistent references to Supervielle, to Lautréamont, to Holbein the Younger, to Quevedo, to LaFontaine, to Musset, to Nerval, to Vallejo, to Neruda and to Paz, its closest links are to pulp fiction in the Lovecraft mould. Lovecraft, if he was alive, could almost claim to have been plagiarized in passages such as this:

Have you ever paused, my friend, to think about the appalling concept of infinity, time and space without beginning or end? That is what I saw that morning in the shaft of the dumbwaiter. Infinity was like the flesh of a wet, bland squid, slimy and slobbery, a texture without color or orientation, the pure vertiginous *sensuality* of a great white mollusk ignorant of time or space.

In the closing pages of *Distant Relations* the narrator is named by the Comte de Brany as "Fuentes", but this reason for this personal appearance by the author is never made clear. Having his name on the spine and the title page should have been embarrassing enough.

## Life through death

Holly Eley

Lisa St Aubin de Terán

Keepers of the House  
183pp. Cape. £6.95.  
0 224 02001 3

*Keepers of the House* is a remarkably good first novel, though "novel" is in some ways a misleading term; rather it is a narrative in which Lisa St Aubin de Terán, through the medium of Lydia Beltrán, involves Anglo-Saxon readers in the lives of the inhabitants of the Momby valley. Hispanic preoccupations with allegory, fantasy, fable and violence are interpreted here, an Englishwoman whose vision of El Dorado is transmuted, through the impracticalities of life in a strange land with a dying, twentieth-century cooquatorial, into a relatively simple concern for survival and procreation. A panoply of detail bastions verisimilitude, and an attractive plainness of style, as well as the absence of the kind of comic exaggeration with which Latin-American writers often feel obliged to present their characters, dispel initial fears of feyness.

The blurb tells us that for seven years Lisa St Aubin de Terán managed her husband's sugar plantation, the Andes. On arrival at La Bebelia, in this strongly autobiographical book, the force of her overt and expectations makes her fantasy work; with death, in the shape of a pet turkey-vulture, temporarily under control, she revives her husband, the melancholic Diego, instils hope in the farm workers who see her as the personification of past Beltrán nobility, and starts to restore the crumbling hacienda. In an order of natural disaster, Lydia Beltrán's optimism (and Lisa St Aubin de Terán's imagery) changes; the valley is no longer a fertile place, the habitat of frangipani, clematis and humming-bird. Crops wither, sheep die and bookworms and weevils eat their way through library and storeroom; peasant girls no longer turn up for work and are replaced by grotesque Matilde, who moves like a bird of ill-omen "swallowed up" by her own shapelessness, carrying a seed of gloom that she has rolled and kneaded into the corn bread and stirred into the soup: that she made. But still the hacienda seems to Lydia like home: "It was where she belonged and its history had grown under her skin like anubra".

Her first child dies in infancy; the turkey-vulture is banished; her husband suffers a stroke. Drought has

driven everyone from the valley except for Lydia, Diego, their unborn second child and eighty-nine year old Benito Mendoza, who has served the Beltráns since childhood. Lydia begins, encouraged by Benito, to reconstruct the history of the Beltráns from the day in 1785 on which Rodrigo and Sanchi Beltrán first appeared at La Bebelia, married the beautiful de Labastida twins and started a dynasty. Through the biography of a family, which forms the main body and is the most original part of *Keepers of the House*, Lydia not only comes to accept Benito's dictum, "Fate has brought you to chronicle our decline", and by so doing to reconcile the reality of her decaying surroundings with her romantic vision, but also, after Benito's death, finds the resolve to escape from the valley if not from the past.

In a series of allegorically headed, self-contained chapters, characters such as the misanthropic Admiral Silence, crazed murderer Arturo Lino and Maria Candiani, whose willfulness causes the massacre of many Beltráns, fan out like a hand of cards. Beltrán, for one, is a kind of comic exaggeration with which Latin-American writers often feel obliged to present their characters, dispel initial fears of feyness.

Although the subject of *Keepers of the House* appears to be an intensely observed, colourful family employed as a metaphor for the end of the old order in an exotic place, this is not essentially what the book is about. At the end Lydia, the child in her womb "laden with history before it was born", halts the jeep (that she has built single-handed from spare parts) to look for the last time down into the valley and shoots a vulture so that its flock, feeding on the carcass, might be momentarily distracted from her paralysed husband. Here it is the reinforcement of life through death that is symbolized rather than the end of a cycle or of an era.

In effect, this is an account – particularly gripping, because of the quality of the writing and the esoteric setting – of a strong-willed young woman's education by experience. Quietly feminist in inspiration, it stands comparison with the novels of Willa Cather, *Wide Sargasso Sea* or Phyllis Shand Allfrey's *The Orchid House*.

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## commentary

## Staging a cause célèbre

Douglas Johnson

Dreyfus  
Hamstead Theatre

The scene of Jean-Claude Grumberg's *Dreyfus* is set in the suburbs of a small town in Poland, at some time in the early 1930s. Instead of putting on the traditional Yiddish comedy as part of their amateur theatricals, a group of Jews has been persuaded by one of its number, Maurice (Tom Wilkinson), to perform a version of the Dreyfus affair which he has written for them. This will, he believes, demonstrate a valuable lesson.

Wherever there are Jews they are in danger. Even in France in the 1890s, even with the Dreyfuses, who were rich and with Alfred Dreyfus, who was a captain, everything could turn against the Jews. As long as there was hatred of the Jew, then he was never safe, and it was necessary to demonstrate not to dominate the existence of such hatred.

But as we watch the rehearsals taking place in a shabby meeting-room, we see that Maurice's cast do not know what to make of it. Mimi, the tailor (Jonathan Lynn), knows a man who is in the army, as the Dreyfus family used to be, who has two sons. He would never accept that one of them should become a soldier. Zeca (Stella Tamer), who is to play Dreyfus's mother, is equally sure that no good mother would wish her son to join the army where he could never be his own master but would always have someone superior to him. Later she expresses suspicions of his innocence and she can't believe that he would have been sent to prison if he hadn't done something wrong, even if it was

only annoying someone by being too ambitious. Arnold, her husband (Gary Waldham), who is to play Emile Zola ("Zola-Schmoller"), sees what Dreyfus ought to have done. He should have written to his general and said simply that if they couldn't agree, then perhaps it would be better for them to break up, and he would then have resigned.

*Dreyfus*, translated by Tom Kempinski and directed by Nancy Meckler, is rich in humour and in irony. It becomes gripping as the characters discuss what they really like to do, with Michael (Alfred Molina), who plays Dreyfus, expressing his enthusiasm for the saintly Jacob of Kobryn who, according to the story, passes his Sabbath looking after a sick old Polish woman, while Wasselbaum, a visiting lecturer, explains how there are those who are working to create a Jewish state in Israel. The play becomes powerful as the historical irony turns bitter. At the end, when the Dreyfus rehearsals have been abandoned, we learn that Michael and his wife have gone to live in Berlin, and that they find it surprisingly easy to get lodging in the Jewish quarter, while Maurice has become a worker in Warsaw. He now regrets the attempt to produce a play about Dreyfus. One should never look back. One should look to the future. Long live the Polish Communist party, he writes. The champion of Jewish emancipation has abandoned Jewish tradition.

The play has gained in meaning since the first French production in 1974. When two drunken Poles break into the rehearsal, looking for trouble and for a little Jew-baiting, they are astonished to find two characters, dressed in ornate uniforms, who defend themselves with their stage

sword and rifle. "Have the Jews got an army now?" asks one of them anxiously, before they lurch out.

This is not then a play about the Dreyfus affair. In spite of its inherent drama, the affair is too complicated and too dependent upon detail to be effectively conveyed through theatre. This is what Amdel explains to Maurice. If you want to say things about Dreyfus, he says, you shouldn't do this by means of a play, you should give a lecture. He adds that the audience, once they learn about what happened thirty-five years earlier, are likely to go back home and say "so what, a Jew shouldn't try to become a French captain."

But the essence of the Dreyfus affair does not reside in the detail. It resides in the reaction of the public. It probably mattered little in the 1890s whether certain military information had been given to the Germans or not, or if it did matter, its importance disappeared with the passage of time. Yet the story is still one of enormous importance.

The skill of Grumberg's play is that the reactions of the players to Dreyfus are shared by the audience in the theatre. We participate in Maurice's enthusiastic indignation; we are intrigued by Zeca's suspicions; we are confronted by Jewish tradition and, at the same time, by an apparent lack of Jewish solidarity; we are faced by Jewish apprehension of the pogrom that always lies just around the corner, while at the same time we see the Jew, ordinary life. The Jew should never feel at home anywhere, says Michael. Dreyfus is an impressive play, well produced, with a strong and effective cast, and it is to be warmly recommended.

## Information, please

Walter Layton: papers, personal recollections etc sought; for an authorized biography.

D. F. Habbbeck.  
4 Provost Road, London NW3 4ST.

John Wilson (1748-1835). Loyalist refugee and proprietor (1789-1823) of the "European Museum" at 8 King Street, St James's. Information sought about Wilson or his "museum"; for a study.

Richard Lloyd.  
Culbush Farm, Radwinter, Saffron Walden, Essex.

First World War unpublished diaries: information and assistance sought from owners of such diaries; for a research project.

Jane E. Hewison.  
Department of English and Drama, Loughborough University of Technology, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire.

Ania Kavan (d. 1968). British writer: any information, including correspondence, reminiscences or unpublished writing; for a critical study.

Aurea McLeod.  
39 Larnie Road, London N7.

Helen Mathers (Mrs Henry Reeves) (1853-1920), novelist: any letters, and references to her life, interests, dealings with publishers, etc.; also family information which might derive from descendants of her only son Philip, and/or other living relatives.

Geoffrey Larken.  
17 Fowlers Hill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 4QT.

Sir Thomas Phillips, MS graecus 14031: present whereabouts of this Byzantine manuscript, containing various liturgical works, sold by Sothebys in London on June 26, 1967, as Lot 626.

Paul Moore.  
Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 59 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Sir Chhotu Ram (1881-1945). Punjabi statesman: personal reminiscences sought, especially from former ICS personnel; for a projected volume of impressions and reminiscences.

Pardaman Singh.  
Department of History, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak (Haryana), India.

John Rhys (1890?-1979): whereabouts of any material by or relating to her; for a projected critical bibliography.

Mary Knight.  
Department of English Literature, Sheenwood Mount, Sheenwood Road, Sheffield S10 2TD.

Tobias Smollett (1721-71): for a revised and updated edition (World's Classics) of *Jim Clavel's Peregrine Fiekle* (OBN, 1964) and *M. Knapp's Humphry Clinker* (1966); any desirable corrections of the text, introduction, chronology, or notes.

P.-G. Bouc.  
36 Avenue Rahelala, 92160 Antony, France.

Miss Woodward: feminist and honorary secretary of the International Anti-Vivisection Council in 1908; any information about her life and work; for a history of the Brown Dog Riots.

Coral Lansbury.  
English Department, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ 08102.

Danielle Frances Yates: Gifts of her letters or photocopies thereof, or the loan for photocopying and return of originals, sought by her literary executors as undesignated; for a complete collection of her letters to be kept with her other papers; at the Warburg Institute; originals or copies should be sent to the Director, Warburg Institute.

J. N. Hilarib.  
University of London, Warburg Institute, Warburg Square, London WC1R 0AB.

Hugh MacDiarmid: letters sought for inclusion in an authorized edition of MacDiarmid's correspondence.

Alan Bold.  
Balmiric Burns, East Cottage, near Markinch, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 6NE.

Alexander Alexander, soldier in Ceylon and South America, whose life was written by himself, edited by John Howell, was published by Blackwood in 1830: whereabouts of original MS.

St Antony's College, Oxford.

Li-Cai John By (1779-1836), founder of Ottawa, who spent his last years at Sheffield Park, Rant, Sussex: whereabouts of his private papers; for a biography.

Robert F. Legget.  
531 Echo Drive, Ottawa K1S 1N7, Canada.

Jean-Baptiste Carrand (d.1871) and Louis Carrand (1827-88): any information about these collectors and their collections, especially that of decorative art, part of which is housed in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello.

Martha McCrory.  
Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Via Proconsolo 4, 50122 Firenze, Italy.

Dorjoff, Tibetan lama at the time of the Youngbushand Expedition to Tibet (1903-04), and his personal secretary Narzupoff: any information or anecdotes concerning them; for a study of the non-British protagonists in the events which led up to the expedition.

J. I. Somers.  
Fine Books Oriental, Empire House, 34-35 High Holborn, London WC1.

David Dudley Field (1805-94), American lawyer and law reformer, father-in-law of Sir Anthony Musgrave (1828-88): letters, documents, photographs or any other pertinent information sought; for a biography.

Philip J. Bergan.  
935 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10028.

Hugh MacDiarmid: letters sought for inclusion in an authorized edition of MacDiarmid's correspondence.

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Balmiric Burns, East Cottage, near Markinch, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 6NE.

## Competition No 78

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than July 30. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. The solution and results will appear on August 6.

1 He surveyed through the park railings the evidences of the town's opulence and luxury with an approving eye. All these people had to be protected. Protection is the first necessity of opulence and luxury. They had to be protected; and their horses, carriages, houses, servants had to be protected; and the source of their wealth had to be protected in the heart of the city and the heart of the country; the whole social order favourable to their hygienic idleness had to be protected against the shallow enviousness of unhygienic labour.

2 Here, the surface of things is certainly humdrum, the streets dingy, the green places, where the child goes a-maying, tame enough. But nowhere are things more apt to respond to the brighter weather, nowhere is there so much difference between the rain and sunshine, nowhere do the clouds roll together more grandly; those quaint suburban pastures gathering a certain quality of grandeur from the background of the great city, with its weighty atmosphere, and portent of storm in the rapid light on dome and bleached stone steeples.

3 They came off their second winter, for the season was terribly hard, and as in that lower world one

walked with one's ear nearer the ground the deep perpetual groan of London misery seemed to swell and swell and form the whole undertone of life. The filthy air reached the place in the damp coats of silent men and hung there full it was hushed in a nauseous warmth, and ugly serious faces squared themselves through it, and strong-smelling pipes contributed their element in a fierce dogged manner which appeared to say that it now had to stand for everything - for bread and meat and beer, for shoes and blankets and the poor things at the pawnbroker's and the smokeless chimney at home.

## Competition No 74

Winner: Mary Anderson

## Answers:

1 Admitted the horrors of that dream I think the worst lay here. Methought the well-loved dead, who had loved me well in life, met me elsewhere, allocated: galled was my inmost spirit with an unutterable sense of despair about my future. Motive there was none why I should try to recover or wish to live; and yet quite unendurable was the pitiless and haughty voice in which Death challenged me to engage in his unknown terrors.

Charlotte Bronte, *Villette*

2 He dreamed a long, troubled dream... He stood on a raised stage, under his own loom; and, looking up at the shape the loom took, and hearing the burial service distinctly read, he knew that he was there to suffer death. In an instant what he stood on fell below him, and he was gone.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

3 This August I began to dream of drowning. The dying went on and on in water as white as the gin I drink each day at half past five.

Anne Sexton, "Imitations of Drowning"

## Fifty years on: 'The Woman Problem'

The TLS of July 7, 1932 carried the following review of *The Modern Woman and Herself* by Margaret Kornitzer, *The True Woman* by C. K. Munro and *Woman, Theme and Variations* by A. Corbett-Smith:

"Why is there a problem of Woman? and no similar problem of Man?" asks Mr Munro; and in these three books reasons for the existence of the problem and the woman itself are discussed from three widely different standpoints. Miss Kornitzer, a scholar and philosopher, passionately in earnest; Mr Munro is witty and penetrating; while Corbett-Smith is frequently flippant, frequently and purposefully daring, always interesting, but never so illuminating as Miss Kornitzer.

Miss Kornitzer appears to be thinking aloud in her book, setting down the bewilderedments she meets, in herself and the other women, suggesting enlightenment and explanation of the essential differences between men and women; while urging that these differences need not prevent a happy comity between the sexes; she emphasizes the importance of biological differences, which account, she suggests, for the universal phenomenon of the deserted woman; the questing man; the man, by his very nature, needs immediate satisfaction for his demands, physical, spiritual and mental; the woman instinctively playing for security and continuity, without which her deeper nature cannot develop. Miss Kornitzer's passionate yet sober statement of their case and yet enjoy Mr Munro's witty indictments. But they have grown very tired of the "Bless her!" type of article, who irritates but cannot be said to illuminate.

In books like these generalizations seem inevitable, and in these generalizations their weakness lies, especially today, when there seem to be so many of those people whom Bernard Carpenter called the "intermediate sex" in social life. Miss Kornitzer's chapter on "Immediacy," however, culling observations and proofs from far below, the surface of human behaviour, definitely makes a contribution to the problem of sexual relationships, while Mr Munro, witty and observant of surface behaviour, is also illuminating. Mr Corbett-Smith, although his book is packed with intimate anecdotes designed to elucidate the problems of women, has not the gravity of Miss Kornitzer or the pungency of Mr Munro; the concluding words in his introduction set the tone of his book: "Finally, 'He who knows the worst of you and still loves you' is the best definition of a friend that I know. And that is my attitude towards 'Woman.' Bless her!" Women may welcome Miss Kornitzer's passionate yet sober statement of their case and yet enjoy Mr Munro's witty indictments. But they have grown very tired of the "Bless her!" type of article, who irritates but cannot be said to illuminate.

Philip J. Bergan.  
935 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10028.

Hugh MacDiarmid: letters sought for inclusion in an authorized edition of MacDiarmid's correspondence.

Alan Bold.  
Balmiric Burns, East Cottage, near Markinch, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 6NE.

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Alan Bold.  
Balmiric Burns, East Cottage, near Markinch, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 6NE.

## Subsidizing Literature

Sir - Your correspondent Robert Vas Dias (Letters, June 25) writes that British literary publishing will continue to be impoverished until the Arts Council's Literature Panel fulfils certain conditions. One is that "the entire panel is rotated every year or at most every two years". Almost all suggestions for improvement are worth considering, but I am sure this procedure would achieve no good ends.

The Arts Council cannot but be a complicated organization. To gain a working knowledge of its procedures and potential, two years are not enough, one ridiculously insufficient. Unless enough Panel members have been there for long enough to have some understanding of how the system works (let alone to work the system), the result would be to place disproportionate power in the hands of the officers.

Mr Vas Dias also asks that the Literature Panel be made "more representative of the great diversity of magazine and little-press publishing in this country". This is only one of several reasonable claims for places on the Literature Panel, and it is likely, as the rest are, to be somewhat but not always satisfied. It should be remembered that, if feasible, Panel members should not currently be in receipt of or applying for grants.

At present the Panel's members are two novelists, one of whom is a children's writer, a non-fiction writer, a book-publisher who is also a poet, a printer, a critic, a television producer, and the literary editor of a recently specialized, though not a little-press journal. But though the aim is constantly to achieve right balance in the Panel, other factors are at least as important as nominal qualifications, especially as Panel members do not serve as delegates for interests. They must, for instance, understand the purpose and nature of argument, and they must have courage. They must have time to attend at least five regular meetings a year; some of them must be willing to liaise with other Arts Council committees; all must be willing to read and write reports on books, manuscripts, journals, but also to visit and report on organizations, where are funding or might fund. They receive no financial compensation for the work they do.

They must be well informed, and they must be capable of taking in and using new information. Typically, a recent Literature Panel met

ing discussed or touched on: poetry readings; outlets for book sales; newspaper reviewing; literary journals; including little-press journals; writers' fees; local radio; contacts with other organizations. Another meeting might cover as wide a range of topics, and barely touch these. However the Panel might be composed, it could never have all the specialized knowledge its duties demand. For this the Literature Panel relies on three officers who have or can amass the knowledge.

Indeed, I would say that in the particular field of small-scale publishing, both of books and magazines, the officers' knowledge of this subject is unmatched.

There are two other criteria the Panel members must meet. They must be able to work disinterestedly. If the result of having a small-press publisher on the Panel was a dramatic increase in small-press products funded, there would be much cause for worry. And a Panel must be composed of people who can work well together without that dangerous cohesiveness that excludes new ideas. One major safeguard is external criticism, which may come, notably, from interested pressure groups and from interested individuals. There can never be a final answer to criticisms of oology work.

Finally, of course it is hard for many postulants to accept that the most probable reason for their not receiving grants is that the work they present is regarded as of an insufficiently high standard by people well enough qualified to make judgments and constantly anxious about the judgments they have made.

MARGHANITA LASKI.  
Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, London W1.

## Public Lending Right

Sir - The Publishers Association is obviously having difficulty in understanding why publishers should not receive a share of an author's income from Public Lending Right. Its President's caressing letter of June 18 calls for a response.

PLR is "a right conferred on authors" and one for which only authors can register. Contrary to the statement made in the PA's annual report, publishers cannot undertake this function for them. The only way to which a publisher can obtain a share of PLR will be either by an author assigning the right to him

(with perhaps unwelcome generosity), or by the publisher insisting that the only form of contract into which he will enter must be one ensuring that he is paid a proportion of the author's PLR income.

We, supported by the Writers Guild and the Authors' Lending Copyright Society, take the view that it would be entirely improper for publishers to insist on being paid a proportion of PLR income, not only for the above reason, but because a very limited amount of money (two million pounds less administrative expenses) has been set aside by Government for PLR payments. Yes, publishers share income from the exploitation of copyright, but the value of copyright depends on commercial forces and not on specific funds allocated by Government for a specific purpose.

It would be a travesty of justice if publishers were to allow themselves to dip their cups into such a shallow fountain, and I doubt whether any reputable publishers have it seriously in mind to do so.

DEREK PARKER.  
Society of Authors, 84 Drayton Gardens, London SW10.

## 'Against Criticism'

Sir - Iain McGilchrist (Letters, June 25) courteously objects to my saying that many of his assumptions derive from Romantic or post-Romantic poetries.

My review (June 11) of *Against Criticism* referred to a number of specific notions readily identifiable with, and made familiar to us through the writings of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Poe and others. That Heracitus or the Taoists had similar ideas on some matters does not invalidate the point. I noted that McGilchrist invoked the authority of these sages, and would now add that I don't think he would have used them in the way he does if he didn't belong within the broad tradition I describe as Romantic. This is hardly a dismaying one: literary criticism stands to gain from a return to some of its animating principles. McGilchrist seems to me to be performing a service in this valuable direction, but since he believes that all criticism is condemned by definition to work against itself, I take it as consistent that he should work for certain purposes by seeking to appear to defy them.

"The real problem is that by labelling my position, Professor Rawson effectively avoids the question of its truth." In fact, I was not talking

about a "position" but about underlying attitudes, "assumptions". I made rather a point of indicating that those parts of McGilchrist's excellent book which could be described as expressing a "position" seemed to me the least interesting; reductive, relatively trivial, and happily out of phase with his subtle and vivid accounts of individual authors. As to "truth" in such matters, I confess to not believing there is such a thing. Criticism is at best a highly approximate activity, and I think there are only models or working hints, not truths, about how it might or ought to be conducted. McGilchrist's conviction that his "position" has a "truth" that can be conclusively affirmed or denied seems to me to run against some of the main features of his own argument. But perhaps that's his point, in another of his guises.

CLAUDE RAWSON.  
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## Comparing Picassos

Sir - Visitors to the exhibition of drawings from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, at present in the British Museum might like to note that the scrap of paper in the Picasso collage, "Head" (1913), is from the same copy of *Le Figaro* utilized in the Tate's "Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass, Guitar and Newspaper" (also dating from 1913), since they are both from a report by a Russian correspondent of the coronation of the Tsar, Alexander III.

The newspaper, dated May 1883, must have looked almost as old to Picasso as it does to us and one wonders where he acquired a thirty-year-old copy of *Le Figaro*. In the Tate collage, he can scarcely have simply wished it to represent today's paper negligently thrown beside a still-life composition. Parisians would not have accepted it as such any more than we would accept as such, for example, the old-fashioned front page of advertisements of *The Times* of yesterday in a 1982 still-life. More likely, he used it to stand for the "materiality" of the table-top, as it plainly stands for the "materiality" of the head in the Museum of Modern Art drawing. It follows that the word "Newspaper" should not be in the title of the Tate still-life, where, from the point of view of the aesthetics of cubism, it is misleading.

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## William Henry Hunt

Sir - "Hunt... was made to copy the contents of Monro's portfolios, and was especially struck by the drawings of Canaletto," observes Graham Reynolds. In his review of *William Henry Hunt* by John Wilt (June 25). He was indeed, with unfortunate consequences. Sir John Wilt quotes John Linnell's description of Dr. Monro's "Academy" where he and Hunt were paid "one shilling and sixpence the hour" for copying. "Some of these copies were afterwards, I have no doubt, sold for original," adds Linnell. F. C. Stephens thought this a mistake and that "the Doctor was actuated solely by his love of art." I wonder which was right. After Monro's death in 1833 there were seventeen drawings sold at Christie's which were either attributed to "Canaletto" or "after Canaletto by Hunt". How many were by Hunt and where have they and their predecessors all gone?

Four, perhaps from the sale, perhaps sold in Monro's lifetime, have been identified in the British Museum. They are in Wilt's catalogue, but he does not mention that all were bought as Canalettos, one by the Museum itself, the others by three different collectors. There is a fifth which reached the Ashmolean Museum, not as by Canaletto but as

by Thomas Patch. Hunt's signature leaving been cut off. Wilt catalogues another version of this by Hunt at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where Canaletto's original is. I am no drawings expert, but I might suspect Hunt's hand in other "Canaletto" drawings in both public and private collections. Sir John Soane, for example, owned a doubtful Canaletto drawing of unknown origin - but he also owned a copy of Monro's 1833 sale catalogue.

Your distinguished reviewer also refers to Hunt's technique of "painting in transparent colour over an opaque white ground". This is in connection with Hunt's bird's nests and fruit, not his copies of Canaletto drawings, but I may be able to make a small contribution. Forty years ago Algernon Newton told me that he accounted for the extraordinary light effects he was able to achieve by what he called his penetration of "the Canaletto secret". This was to paint in monochrome, over which he put a series of colour glazes. It is a pity that the most recent technical examination of Canaletto's paintings does not confirm that this was his usual method. I can but report Newton's words which must carry weight, come long as they do from perhaps Canaletto's closest follower in centuries, and which may have an added significance in the light of Hunt's methods as now revealed.

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## 'Time, Action and Necessity'

Sir - Morton Grosser charges me with simplistic error (Letters, July 2). But he has not understood the issue, which is in essentials this. There are two opposed views about the truth-conditions of future-tense statements. One crucial way in which they differ is as follows: according to the first, a statement that something will happen is true only if conditions are already present that make it inevitable that it will happen. According to the second, this is not so: a future-tense statement can be true even if it is not already determined that what it predicates will actually happen; it is true just so long as the thing in question does happen. Denyer holds the first view (among others). I suggested that the second was more natural.

There are, assuredly, points to be made on both sides. But it is not by reference to what computers can or cannot do, nor by reference to what we can or cannot know or predict about what they do or will or will not do, that we will be able to decide which if either of these two views is correct. It is not an empirical question.

I do not really understand the point of what Mr. Grosser says about polarity reversals of computer switches. But when he talks of the "999,999 thousandth such reversal", I think he has 998,999,001 more than he needs!

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## The Red Earl

Sir - Tucked in below a review of several books on the Princess of Wales (June 25), the majority of them, your reviewer assured us, of the utmost inconsequence, you noted a book published by the Northampton Record Society on the Princess's great-great-uncle, the 5th Earl Spencer. From the summary you give, your readers might well take away the impression that out volume was in the same tradition. "Many of the letters exchanged between Lord Spencer and his wife concern the repair and redecoration at Althorp." Four out of 414 documents printed deal with this matter. The bulk of the book prints political papers of a political figure of the first importance. It has much less on nineteenth-century Ireland.

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## Among this week's contributors

PAUL ARTHUR is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the Ulster Polytechnic.

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SHARLE CAINCROSS was Master of St John's College, Oxford from 1969-1974. His books include *Inflation, Growth and International Finance*.

JOHN CONRAD's most recent book is *Verdun: The Medium and Its Message*, 1982.

Dawn Chew is a Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and author of *A Social History of Britain 1860-1914*, 1979.

ANTHONY DANTO's most recent book is *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 1981.

ROBERT L. MONTGOMERY is Professor of English at the University of California, Irvine.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* was published last year.

PETER FRANK is a Senior Lecturer in Soviet Government and Politics at the University of Essex.

JEREMY HANDIE is Vice-Chairman of the Monopolies Commission.

JOHN HOPE MASON's *The Indispensable Rousseau* was published in 1979.

GEORGE A. HOSKING's *Beyond Socialist Realism: Fiction Since (Ivan Denisovich)* was published in 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of History at University College London.

JULIE KAVANAGH is Reviews Editor of *Harpers and Queen*.

JONATHAN KEATES teaches English at the City of London School.

JAMES KIRKPATRICK teaches Comparative Literature of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan.

ADAM MARS-JONES's collection of stories, *Leisure*, has recently won the Somerset Maugham Prize.

ROBERT L. MONTGOMERY is Professor of English at the University of California, Irvine.

ANDREW MOTTON's long poem *Independence* was published last year.

A. D







## Due to determinism

A. D. Nuttall

PHILIP DREW

The Meaning of Freedom  
489pp. Aberdeen University Press.  
£18.50.  
0 08 025743 7

Before one opens Philip Drew's *The Meaning of Freedom* one sees on the dust-jacket Delacroix's picture of Liberty rallying the people. That firmly planted left foot with its Raphaelesque ankle, the half-turned torso, leaning with wind-blown garments into the future, is reminiscent of a line of older figures of Fortune ruling the world. Such is the power of determinism upon our minds. Even concepts formed in opposition to the very idea of determinism are gradually transformed into ruling goddesses. Those sceptical Greeks who said the world was ruled not by fate but chance were soon (perhaps because of that treacherous word "ruled") building temples to Chance.

Professor Drew begins by sketching the elementary conflict between free will and determinism and then launches himself upon the history of English literature, viewed in the light of this perennial conflict. The list of authors treated is a long one: Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Arnold, Hardy, Eliot (George), Dickens, Wilde, Huxley, Koestler, Orwell and, from French literature, Gide, Genet, Beckett: all, incidentally, treated not as examples of cultural or economic determinism but as cognitive investigators. Indeed the list is too long, for each person in it receives only summary justice. Something is badly wrong when, in a substantial work addressing the problem of free will, Faust's lines on the "wages of sin" are blandly summed

up with the phrase, "Divinity tells him that the life of man is subject to universal law." Marlowe had his hero quote only fragments of Scripture to construct his paralyzing syllogism: "The reward of sin is death," "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves," "We must die an everlasting death." Faust's first premise continues, in Roman 6 (Geneva Bible), "but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" and his second continues (in 1 John, 1), "If we acknowledge our sins he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins." So true divinity may not teach what Faust says. But then Marlowe was writing in an age dominated by Calvin. Redemption is by Grace alone and Grace is never earned by merely human effort. If Faust is not receiving Grace then, after all, the words he said and his inference (as far as his own situation goes) is once more impeccable. At this point real thought and real criticism might begin.

Sometimes Drew simply gets things wrong. He thinks Pope in his *Essay on Man* embraced Newtonian mechanism, a "withdrawn and abstracted" God. Yet Pope's God "blossoms in the trees, lives through all life" and "breathes in our soul." If that is not an organically immanent God, I do not know what is. Hume's sceptical critique of the substantial ego is seen as no more than an expression of the eighteenth-century preference for stable, social harmony; this, of the philosopher who dissolved God, the external world and the self into a flux of perceptions. When Hume, in the later books of the *Treatise*, tried to make good the ravages of scepticism, he appealed not to social harmony but, as Kemp Smith has shown, to the profoundly Romantic doctrine of the constitutive imagination.

Most fundamental, for readers of literature, is the distinction between

extro-human and psychic determinism. Drew draws this distinction but seems never to have it to hand when it is needed. He cites Whitehead's account of un-freedom as consisting in those harsh aspects of nature which frustrate the purposes of human beings. Here the universe is an arena in which a genuine freedom may put up some sort of fight. But then there is the doctrine that every event, in so far as it is caused or motivated (and all events are) is predetermined; by this second view the very struggle of man against his environment is itself determined, so that the apparent contest between freedom and necessity vanishes and we are left with a mere unmeaning discord of colliding causal sequences. This distinction should have been far more firmly applied in Drew's analysis of Hardy, who oscillates between the conception of a tragically defeated freedom and a sense that freedom was always an illusion. A common pattern in more severely fatalistic works like Chaucer's *Trilogies* and Crèvecoeur's *Letters* (we are eow back to Delacroix's "Liberté").

But in general he resists and thus, for example, concludes that Milton's Adam was not free to stand or fall. He

treatment of the philosophical problem is both intelligent and subtle. In general, however, Drew is too easily persuaded that logical necessity and the presence of motive erode freedom. In his discussion of Chaucer he is quick to reject the Boethian theology which grants that God's foreknowledge entails the occurrence of certain events but denies that it constrains them to occur. But Boethius's point has real power. As I write I can see another person writing. My knowledge entails that she should be writing but does not compel her to do so. Nothing so far as ruled out the possibility that she is writing freely and that that is what I know. Similarly, if it is true (now) that I will lunch tomorrow at one I cannot lunch at any other time. But this is entailed, not constraint. Drew softens towards this important truth when he grants that statistical generalizations become (coercive) "laws" only by a highly misleading metaphor (we are eow back to Delacroix's "Liberté").

But in general he resists and thus, for example, concludes that Milton's Adam was not free to stand or fall. He

## Pleasing the public

Stanley Weintraub

JAMES M. BROWN

Dickens Novelist in the Market-Place  
180pp. Macmillan. £15.  
0 333 30083 1

The clash between artistic integrity and market considerations is as old as commercial publishing. James Brown's book, despite its title, wavers between considering Dickens's compromises with his readership and his novelising of Victorian society itself as a market-place. Although the study oscillates between concepts, some useful perspectives emerge.

"At all times," Brown insists early in the book, "the novels will be considered in their own right and will be kept separate from Dickens's own journalism, letters and speeches. These will not be used to provide 'background' information, or to help elucidate difficult passages, or to justify critical arguments which cannot be supported from the text." Fortunately, Brown forgets such rigidities when the need occurs for the resonances which documentary corroboration furnishes. These impulsive utterances, penned without art or commerce in mind, mirror Dickens's actual state of mind as the novels were being turned out. For example, Dickens would write, pessimistically, to a friend, "As to the struggle, I have lost hope even in the ballot. We appear . . . to have proved the failure of representative institutions without an educated and advanced people to support them."

And a year before Dickens wrote *Black House*, we discover that he had insisted that without improvements in housing and sanitation, "those classes of people which increase the fastest, made so miserable, as to bear within themselves the certain seeds of ruin to the whole community."

The three Brown reads to this is revolution; and he propounds the interesting thesis that the 1859 *Tale of Two Cities*, usually dismissed as lacking the social vision of the other later novels, utilizes "the distancing medium of an historical melodrama" to examine the condition of contemporary mid-Victorian England and to explore "one of the possible consequences of that condition." Nevertheless, Brown admits, the English working class resembled the passive sufferers of Bleeding Heart Yard more than the liberators of the Bastille. As in *Little Dorrit*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *Black House*, the sinister and corrupting power of money motivates much of the action of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which has its symbol, the Circumlocution Office, the respectable and prosperous - but ominous - Telford's Bank. Yet even here, Dickens's essential conservatism

sets out as "a cruel anathema" the following: A free man is one who does what he most wants to do. An un-free man is one who does what he has to do. Every man has to do what he most wants to do. But this is not so cruel, because the last sentence is inwardly weak. At first sight it is false. Presumably Drew means that we are pre-set to want certain things. But this does not do freedom. Biologically we need to eat, and though we cannot opt out of the need we can and often do choose to eat. All purposive activity must have a context. Without needs and wishes the action would collapse into mere random action. Similarly, conditioning is not necessarily coercion. A good university actually rewards originality. This Darwinian analysis has elicited and lavishly rewarded cognitive intelligence. Meanwhile the attempt to show that we are logically constrained by our natures collapses into the trivial tautology, "We are what we are," which has exactly as much force, and as little, as "What will be, will be."

emerges in his failure to offer a single word about the mob "that might suggest that revolution is either constructive or beneficial."

Certain other social facts were unacceptable in undiluted form as reading matter for the Victorian public. Both religion and sexuality were so sacred, and Brown observes that such artistic delicacies were badly imposed upon Dickens against his will, since his statements outside his books were often consistent with the most conservative elements of contemporary taste and propriety. An example he notes is Dickens's dislike against John Millis's depiction of a young Jesus in the house of his parents, "The Carpenter's Shop," painted according to the tenets of Pre-Raphaelite realism. Hysterically, Dickens declared that the characters were "hideous" and had come from the "gutter" - that "Wherever it is possible to express ugliness of feature, mind, and nature, you have it expressed." When it came to money and money values, however, Dickens's outrage usually - but not always - emerged uncoloured by anything but the needs of fictional art.

Although Brown never says so explicitly, his *Novelist in the Market-Place* demonstrates how much Dickens tried to have it both ways. As magazine editor as late as 1858, Dickens wanted a member of his staff, "I particularly wish you to look well to Wilkie's article . . . and not leave anything in it that may be sweeping, and unnecessarily offensive to the middle-class." And to a contributor of a piece of fiction he wrote, "I particularly entreat you to consider the catastrophe. You write to be read, of course." Yet in his mature novels Dickens repudiated the contemporary English social system in which relations of exchange value predominated, while being lionized by those in society who made his novels successful. The pervasive images of his fiction condemned a society where friendship, social relations, even friendship and marriage, were "degraded into a form of economic speculation." As Richard Blandos asks Arthur Cleggman in *Little Dorrit*, "How do you live? How do you come here? Have you sold - or bought? . . . Society sells itself and sells me; and I sell Society."

Still, even while Pip's moral growth in *Great Expectations* was being dramatized by his increasing awareness of values which cannot be measured in equivalent money terms, Dickens was busy altering the ending as a concession to his purchasing public, something he would do more than once. His vision of the market shaped the nature of his world aristocracy and his work, making him the first great novelist of the industrialized city and its alienated, dehumanized, and devalued. However, Dickens was himself confused by his ethics, victim as well as critic of his social contradictions.

JOSEF WILCZYNSKI

An Encyclopaedia Dictionary of Marxism, Socialism and Communism  
600pp. Macmillan. £25.  
0 333 30689 9

Josef Wilczynski's *Encyclopaedia Dictionary of Marxism, Socialism and Communism* is an extraordinary document. Its relation to Marxism or socialism, as these are understood in the West, is marginal, and its claims to be "encyclopaedic" must be discounted. Virtually no Marxist thinker is mentioned who has not received recognition or criticism from the Chinese or Soviet Communist Parties, and all the theories and events discussed belong to the "heroic" stage of Marxist revolution in the pre-war century. Gramsci is not mentioned, nor are any of the influential French Marxists (Goldmann, Althusser, Lefebvre, etc.) of the post-war period. Almost every definition is brought back to a tired old slogan from revolutionary rhetoric - the "class struggle," "the dictatorship of the proletariat," "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Neo-Marxism is discussed as though it were entirely a product of US campus frolics in the 1960s, and the influential re-discovery of Hegel by Western Marxists might just as well never have occurred, despite the fact that everything suggestive in modern Marxism - the theory of alienated labour, the analysis of class consciousness, the distinction between civil society and state, etc. - derives from Hegel.

The Marxist doctrines which are referred to are the materialist theory of history (interpreted throughout as "dialectical materialism"), despite the fact that Marx did not use that label, and despite the fact that the "dialectic" is demonstrably wrong; the theory of class struggle, and the labour theory of value. Since all these theories have been refuted it is not surprising to find oneself losing patience with the definitions that are built on them, and only the constant reminder that they were a part of a liturgy that our fellow intellectuals in one third of the world are forced to repeat in all their public announcements, enables one to continue reading although with mounting horror at the extent of human folly.

## Land and contents

Peter Frank

ARCHIE BROWN, JOHN FENNELL,  
MICHAEL KASER and  
H. T. WILLETTTS (Editors)

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union  
920pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£18.50.  
0 521 23169 8

With four such distinguished editors, and with a list of contributors that reads like a "Who's Who?" of Russian and Soviet studies, one expects a great deal from this publication. And expectation is amply justified: it is a first-class encyclopaedia, an excellent introduction to Russia and the Soviet Union - to the land, its people, its political and social systems, and to its art, science and culture. In all its variety, the editors have eschewed the conventional alphabetical listing and have arranged the entries according to topic and theme.

The contents are set out under lettered main headings. These range from "Territory and People," through "History," "Religion," "Art and Architecture," "Society," "The World Role," "The Soviet Union." Each main section contains sub-sections, so that, for example, under "Language and Literature" there are sub-headings: "History of the Language" and so on to "Post-revolutionary Russian Literature." Each sub-section is both a compendium in the overall picture; the whole work is successfully knitted

together by a system of cross-referencing and, more importantly, by the carefully thought-out and effective sequence in which the sections are arranged. There is an extensive index (placed at the front of the book).

To test the quality of the contents, I began by consulting those sections corresponding to my own field of specialization (politics and society). Here the entries give a lucid, compressed but not cryptic account. No specialist could complain of any serious omission and the treatment is, on the whole, well-balanced. The section on the Soviet political system is most satisfactory; that on the country's social system is good, but leans, perhaps, too much towards the official Soviet interpretation and would have benefited from a more evaluative approach.

The encyclopaedia is copiously illustrated (in both monochrome and colour) and nowhere to better effect than in the section on art and architecture; here the elegant and economically written entries are embellished with beautiful reproductions of photographs of buildings, artifacts, icons, paintings, etc. Particularly interesting are the sections on twentieth-century arts in the non-Russian republics, and "Contemporary art: the alternative tradition."

There are also equally satisfactory and comprehensive sections on "Music, Theatre, Dance and Film," "The Sciences," "Society," "Economy," and "Military Power and Policy." This is a book which can be recommended without reservation to specialist, student and ordinary reader alike.

## The liturgy of the left

Roger Scruton

If Marxism fares badly, socialism fares worse. "Socialism" is throughout taken as a technical term of the Marxist theory of history - to denote that system of production relations which supposedly follows on capitalism, and which precedes the final withering away of the state and the emergence of "full communism." In the West, however, the term is not used in that way, and indeed most people who call themselves socialists do so in order to distance themselves from the Marxist theory, either because they recognize that the state is necessary to their aims, or because they believe that the Marxist theory has been refuted. It is extraordinary to find Wilczynski constantly deferring to the myth of "full communism" without any hint of irony. "According to a prediction of N. S. Khrushchev in 1961," he writes, "the phase of socialism in the USSR (the oldest socialist country) would last up to 1980 at least, (after which the country would start entering the phase of full communism). But owing to the Soviet economic setbacks since that time, the socialist phase will in fact be much longer." The idea that socialism might exist, both as theory and practice, outside the Marxist rhetoric, does not seem to have occurred to Wilczynski. All the intellectual labour that went into the making of modern English socialism, for example - the historical analyses of Tawney, Cole, and E. P. Thompson, the social criticism of the New Left, the political theories of the Fabians, the Webbs, Russell, Crosland, and many more - none of this gets more than a casual mention.

Admittedly much of it, with hindsight, appears intellectually dubious. But that is clearly not Wilczynski's criterion for exclusion, since he treats us to the thoughts (or rather slogans) of half the Chinese revolutionaries, and to the theories of every half-baked schoolboy who puts up his hand at some international, then to enter history as revisionist, opportunist, deviationist, or whatever.

The explanation of this bias must lie in the fact that Wilczynski, although now apparently residing in Australia, did much of his research in Poland. His dictionary is, therefore, a dictionary of Marxism, or of socialism, but of official Communist rhetoric. Read as such, it is a remarkable and in some ways impressive document: impressive

for its unscholarly thoroughness, and remarkable for the deadpan tone which it succeeds in maintaining over 660 pages of double columned text. Not that Wilczynski entirely swallows the party line. He allows himself a few criticisms of Soviet tyranny, and even hints that some fairly disreputable things might occasionally have occurred in China. On the whole, however, he represents his dictionary entries as parts of a believable system of thought, applicable in the contemporary world, delivering definite answers to definite questions. It is difficult to know whether the work is one of propaganda and subversion, although the illuminating definition of "entryism" as "boring from within" suggests that it might be. We are told that in socialist countries the Soviet Union collectivization has been "more or less voluntary or has at least been carried out more humanely." (Admittedly it could not have been carried out less humanely.) Likewise, in socialist countries the provision of social welfare is as of right, and all need has therefore been eliminated; besides, there is more or less permanent full employment, so that the problem of welfare seldom in fact arises. (It is of course difficult to know the facts. We know that you lose your right to welfare in Poland if you do not find a job within six months, and that you will lose your welfare. One cannot, however, lose one's welfare. One can only lose one's job.)

The four corner stones of Marxism are, apparently, the labour theory, the materialist theory of history, dialectical materialism and the class struggle. The remaining two are equally, if not more, contentious: as a Pole it is surely possible for Wilczynski to have observed how intensely dated and parochial is the concept of the "class struggle." For one thing, the notion of class with which it was associated (where class meant, roughly, position in production relations) no longer seems clearly to apply, or if it does apply, it is not so as to support a theory of "struggle." While there are indeed "struggles" in the world, they are not between "classes": the struggle in Poland involves a whole people, vainly trying to throw off the yoke imposed on it by an external power, in collaboration, it must be added, with the kind of people who speak the language recorded by Wilczynski. Outside the parlous of the student left, this talk of class struggle seems now to be no more than fantasy.

There is a useful moral to be drawn from Wilczynski's book. I assume that it really does record the main items of political thought that have been contributed by Marxism to political practice, if not to political theory. One begins to see just how disastrous that application has been. The dictionary consists almost entirely of shrill communism in the modern world.

Sometimes Wilczynski shows an awareness that the theory of communism has been criticized. His specialty seems to be economics, and he has great respect for the heroic

slogans, abortive dogmas, absurd "heresies" and controversies, eg. the "one divides into two" versus "two combine into one" controversy, and pity the Chinaman who was on the wrong side. Events are described in mythopoetic language (the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Great Leap Forward, the Great Industrialization Drive, etc) without respect for historical truth, and every half-articulated perception of society takes the form of an "ism", of which one might be accused and for which (in the "heroic" stage) one might have been tried and executed. It is notable that there is not a single concept that belongs to law, that there is no reference to any institution (other than the Communist Party), and that the language of politics - the language which permits people to understand and resolve their conflicts - is swamped by hysterical slogan-shouting from the commanding heights.

If this dictionary is anything to go by, "actual" existing socialism has successfully abolished all the concepts and institutions, legal, political, social and moral, with which men have, over the centuries, attempted to understand their social condition; it has replaced the enterprise of political conciliation with a dogma of "struggle"; and at the same time deprived opposition not only of its legal status, but equally of its right to describe the real complexities of human existence in a language of its own, without raking the charges of "bourgeois ideology", "deviationism", "opportunism" and the rest. It seems to assert that conciliation, adjudication, accommodation, in short, politics as we understand them - are no more than an appearance, beneath which the "essence" of the class struggle takes its inexorable course. But there is no such essence, and, even if there were, knowledge of it would no more be relevant to politics than knowledge of the skull is relevant to the interpretation of a face. The revolutionary overthrow of all existing institutions, all existing legality, all existing morality - this has indeed taken place. But no institution, no legality, no morality, no human understanding seem to have come to replace it. The artefact of centuries was overturned to the name of a myth of "full communism", and, while we may take comfort in the fact that "Leon defended the validity of objective truth" (he would have been hard pressed to attack it), it is undeniable that the inability of Communism to recognize that its theoretical foundations have been refuted shows a contempt for truth, and for human nature, that is without parallel in political history. Wilczynski's dictionary brings home vividly the almost complete intellectual, social, political, and above all moral isolation of

account of its historical, mechanistic and narrow base. Consequently most of them ignore the external dimension to the Northern Ireland question. Equally surprising in a fleeting discussion of putative solutions, the editors touch on the blindingly obvious when they offer a "mutuality solution": that is, the withdrawal of the absolute sovereignties of the United Kingdom and the Republic to be replaced by a Northern Ireland "with a considerable degree of autonomy within the supportive framework of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland." Dublin and London are now pursuing that process feverishly.

Both these studies will appeal to a limited readership. Wallace's may become required reading for those unfortunate enough to be posted to Northern Ireland for short tours of duty and who need a quick reference to the bewildering chronology of the past decade: Boal and Douglas will find it useful to those who are warned about its unevenness, because it reflects both the selectivism and the haphazard nature of geography as a discipline. It is unlikely that, as with the vast majority of books on Ulster, either of these two will outlive the present conflict.

## Long division

Paul Arthur

MARTIN WALLACE

British Government in Northern Ireland: From Devolution to Direct Rule  
192pp. David and Charles. £6.95.  
0 7153 8153 9

FREDERICK W. BOAL and  
J. NEVILLE H. DOUGLAS (Editors)  
Integration and Division: Critical Perspectives on the Northern Ireland Problem  
368pp. Academic Press. £19.80.  
0 12 108080 3

By now Martin Wallace, whose fourth book on Irish matters this is, has a well-established formula - informative, but bland, low-key and tentative, but eschews the emotions and passions of the combatants for the "studied objectivity" of official inquiries. The latter is more promising and reveals the political uncertainty and territorial ambiguity of the Northern Ireland problem. Surprisingly, most of the contributors here are more drawn to consociationalism and fail to take

to the whole book. Wallace also works on the assumption that Government plays the role of Solomon, yet a survey of the evidence suggests that the "Bloody Sunday" should persuade any observer that the Executive need not necessarily be dispassionate nor disinterested. Nor indeed need it have vision: it has taken twelve years of bloody conflict - some would say, setting their sights on the Battle of Baginbun, 812 years - for Dublin and London to establish a Study Group to "analyse the reasons for misconceptions in each country over attitudes and Government policies in the other."

Frederick W. Boal and J. Neville H. Douglas allude to this narrowness of vision in the collection they have edited. "This geographers' collective conducts its enquiry in terms of two alternative models: one consociational and the 'double majority'. The former purports to explain how deeply divided societies can learn to live in harmony, although Cyprus, Lebanon and Northern Ireland have highlighted its practical and theoretical drawbacks. The latter is more promising and reveals the political uncertainty and territorial ambiguity of the Northern Ireland problem. Surprisingly, most of the contributors here are more drawn to consociationalism and fail to take



## Reviving the nation

Daniel Johnson

FRIEDRICH HEER

*Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*  
562pp. Vienna: Böhlau. DM 74.  
3 205 07155 7

HERBERT SEIDLER

*Österreichischer Völkisch und Geisteszeit*  
464pp. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.  
DM 70.  
3 7001 04240

Traditionally Austria has venerated old men and children. It is brave of Friedrich Heer to draw attention to this fact, as Stefan Zweig did before him, since his own immense prestige (not, of course, his scholarly reputation, which rests upon such magisterial works as his *Aufgang Europas* of 1949 and his *Intellectual History of Europe* of 1953) owes something to his longevity. But this indomitable rebel has never cared a straw for prestige; he is worried that his enthusiasm for a republic only half his own age finds so few echoes among the young people who have known no other. In spite of his generous praise of books by youthful scholars like Alfred Pöbigen, the bitter truth is that Heer has no worthy heir. It is not surprising that the final chapter of *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität* (The Struggle for an Austrian Identity) — significantly entitled "Die Zerissenheit" (the mutilated) and "Die Einsamen" (the lonely) — should have fired Heer's imagination, and he promises to develop these themes in two further books, on Austrian writers from Grillparzer to the present, and on political thinkers of the First Austrian Republic.

Heer is torn between the desire not to add fuel to the seedy nostalgia for Franz Joseph's Vienna which is now rampant in Austria — his book *exposes* such myths — and the need to invest Austrian patriotism with historical substance and the traditions to which he has always subscribed: those of universality and of history. This task is no easy one, for Heer is attempting to revive a nation by revealing that the excuses and consolations of the past were really accessories to the national humiliation. Besides being the history of German fear of, and contempt for Austria, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität* is an investigation of Austrian self-obsession since the disintegration of the old baroque synthesis of art, scholarship and politics.

Heer begins at the end, with an anthology of opinions drawn from the debates which have been conducted since 1945 among Austrians about the hash that was made after 1918 and the provincialism brought about by the Holocaust, the Iron Curtain and — Heer would say — a selective memory which former Nazis and Greater Germany enthusiasts do nothing to discourage. An exhilarating tour of the sources which bear on the genesis of a distinctive Austrian consciousness follows, reminding us that in Austria at least to be a medievalist is the best possible qualification for writing modern history. Heer's narrative turns into a description of a struggle with Luther and above all with Luther's inauguration of an anti-Catholic, "irrational", incomparably expressive language and the attempts to impose it, which reached a climax in the "deutschnationaler Sprachkampf" of the last century. The suppression of Austrian Protestantism, provisionally during the Counter-Reformation and definitively under Maria Theresa, Heer considers to have been a catastrophe. To it he attributes the Austrian habit of "dissembling". The descendants of Hussites and Lutheran émigrés, such as Treitschke, became Austria's bitterest foes. The more subtle Jacob Burckhardt, on the other hand, could dismiss attacks on Austrian "chaos" as "mere National Liberalism".

It is in the imperial extravagance of Fischer von Erlach's Schönbrunn (never built), in the pedestrian

"openness" of Leibniz, in the humanism of the Benedictines as mirrored in Mozart that Heer sees the adequate expression of the Austrian ideal: its Spanish ceremonial — "Küss die Hand" only recently ceased to be a standard greeting — leavened by a playful "lightness". The three misshapen figures of Leopold I, Prince Eugen and Leibniz — the two last, like so many great Austrians, baroque *Gastarbeiter* — raised Habsburg Vienna to its peak. But under Maria Theresa Austria bred the "narrow, one-dimensional, 'German type'" which was eventually to undermine the edifice; and the first of the country's three implacable enemies, Frederick the Great (the others being Bismarck and Hitler) stole Silesia and the economic future. Heer nevertheless pays tribute to the Empress's stubbornness. His portrait of Frederick is masterly: the double-life, the self-hatred, the fear of Joseph II, expressed as scorn for the "Archschmarotzer". The Josephine enlightenment — a Bohemian movement wholly un-Bohemian in character — reached new heights of sophistication, but also the narrowness and vulgarly attendant on any anti-clerical *Kulturkampf*. Heer perhaps goes too far in supposing that the disappearance of the *Habsburger* (fool) from the Viennese theatre around 1770 represents the same loss of cheerfulness that, in the *Sturm und Drang* poets of Germany, gave rise to Nietzsche's crude association of enlightenment with pessimism. But he

is undoubtedly right to draw parallels between the generational conflicts in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which culminated in the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon and a millenarian nationalism, and the similar tensions in the Habsburg empire at the turn of the present century, which produced assassins like Friedrich Adler and Gavril Princip, self-assassins like Crown Prince Rudolf and Otto Weininger, and nationalist youths like Adolf Hitler.

Metterich, as the last successful guardian of Austria before the "German avalanche" like his emperors Franz I/II and Ferdinand I, meets with Heer's approval; but the chaparral of famous censorship officials did not insulate its romantic culture from "beyond the veil" visions like Lenau's *Faust* and Albigesser or Schubert's *Winterreise*. In his study of German influences on Austria before 1848, Herbert Seidler does not examine this culture as such, but limits himself to charting the response of scholars like Schreyvogel, Collin and Enk, and writers from Grillparzer to Stifter, to German literature, particularly to the Schlegels, Adam Müller and other Catholic romantics who settled in Vienna. Was Austrian pessimism a German import? Was Wilhelm von Schütz (on whom Goebbels wrote his thesis) alone in seeing Goethe's *Mein Kampf* as the spirit of Protestantism? The breadth of German influence is made clear in

Seidler's book, but only rarely its depth — as when he sees the source of the Austrian Goethe cult in the enduring memory of Leibniz, or finds "the typical Austrian openness to the realities of life" in the priest Bretranek's view of romanticism: "Just where irony seems perfectly sufficient, after having denied to reality all truth with infinite insolence, the flood of yearning bursts forth irresistibly too and drives man restlessly towards peace and reconciliation with the outraged powers of life."

The Austrian reconciliation of opposites was certainly embodied in Friedrich Schlegel, who considered metaphysics a "science of experience", whose lectures attracted so many women that even Varnhagen (who was married to Berlin's greatest bluestocking, Rahel) raised an eyebrow, but who could also write in 1813: "It is indeed high time that this difference in literature [between Austria and Germany] should gradually cease entirely." That was the rub: Nestroy might still exploit the differences between the two countries in spoken German, but by his time the linguistic *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) was an accomplished fact; and the combination of popular discomfiture with the authorities' failure to promote a "struggle of minds" (except perhaps in the harmless manner satirized by Musil), meant that a political dependence on Bismarck's volatile creation followed. Heer

depicts splendidly the depths of mesochism to which Franz Joseph's régime resorted — the insulting of his heir Rudolf and Franz Ferdinand, and of the Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, the demagogic leader of the Catholic "Black-Yellow" opposition, and exploiter of a lower-middle-class brand of antisemitism which Heer traces back two centuries to Abraham a Sancta Clara. To young fanatics like Friedrich Adler, Lueger was a "juggler" and a stick with which to beat their easy-going Social Democratic fathers; but Hitler was more astute, took Lueger as his model and got Catholic politicians like Dollfuss and Schuschnigg to do most of his dirty work for him before 1938. Heer quotes the pitiable Schuschnigg — condemned to hard labour under the Nazis — rebuking himself many years later for having stopped short of totalitarianism.

Did a distinctive Austrian style survive all this? Or was the greatness of Kraus and Herzl, Mahler and Freud only made possible by the "monomaniac, monological existence" which Heer identifies with the German intellect? He leaves us with a mischievously ambiguous answer — his portrait of Joseph Roth: "Socialist, liberal, humanist, Jew, Catholic, Old Austrian." Self-exiled, "broken by the fate of his homeland" (Werfel), with the manners and transience of a guest, Roth's Parisian funeral in 1939 attracted both Habsburg and Communist mourners. In Heer's offering this as an ideal for imitation?

## Forging the masses

David Crew

MARY NOLAN

*Social Democracy and Society Working-class radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890-1920*  
376pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£27.50.  
0 521 23473 5

So much has been written about the Wilhelmine Social Democrats that any new book on the subject must offer not only new facts but a different way of looking at the party's history. Mary Nolan attempts to integrate the history of the working class with the history of the workers' movement, to use each to elucidate the other. This approach, she contends, permits us to break free from the type of narrow political history of the party that is ignorant of the social history of workers. At the same time, it avoids the pitfalls of a social history that ignores politics, attempting to derive explanations of

political behaviour directly from the history of work, culture and community. In short, *Social Democracy and Society* is meant to be a new history not only of the party but of the relationship between it and the working class.

These are legitimate if extremely ambitious aims. Given the magnitude of the task, it is not surprising that the results are partial and uneven. Nolan is at her strongest in describing the political development of the Düsseldorf SPD. The local branch stood on the left wing of the party before the war. By 1917 the city was a stronghold of the USPD. The sources of this radical tradition in Düsseldorf and in the industrial west were, as a local party leader and former student of Rosa Luxemburg put it in 1909, "the economic and political pressures that bear down on the workers... Through them the masses are forged together and learn class consciousness and revolutionary thinking." According to Nolan, the sharpness of class divisions in this industrial town, the power and in-

transigence of large industrial employers, the intensity of political competition between socialists and the Catholic Centre party, combined with the restrictive Prussian suffrage and the weakness of the German Reichstag to make "reformism impossible".

The bureaucratization of the local party after the turn of the century did not produce the ossification and conservatism predicted by both Michels and Luxemburg. In Düsseldorf, as in many other Rhineland and Ruhr industrial towns with large Catholic populations, the Centre party retained a tenuous grip on the loyalties of many members of the working class. To breach the walls of the "Centre Fortress", local social democrats found that they needed a strong and efficient electoral machine. But the men and women who created this party apparatus were seduced neither into reformism nor passive centrism by their electoral victories because these successes produced few tangible rewards. Even after the great electoral advance of 1912, Düsseldorf's social democrats pursued an increasingly radical course because their experience repeatedly showed them "that they had missed any opportunities to play reformist politics. There were none to miss." Düsseldorf's radicals remained sceptical of parliamentarism and advocated extra-parliamentary means, such as the mass strike, to achieve a radical political and social transformation.

But Nolan's explanations of radicalism and reformism are too deterministic. She argues that a south German style of reformism could gain no ground in Düsseldorf because a minimum of progress would have been necessary to make reform plausible. This does not explain why radicalism triumphed. It would be difficult indeed to find communities in which less progress had been made by the industrial working class (apart from those in upper Silesia and the Saar) than the mining and steel towns of the eastern Ruhr, such as Bochum or Dortmund. Yet here radicalism met a cold reception in party councils. Moderate social democrats in Dortmund, who had recently unseated the radicals, did almost as well in the 1912 elections as their more left-wing comrades in Düsseldorf. Clearly, both party leaders and working-class voters in the eastern Ruhr had read the political implications of local and national conditions rather differently. The impossibility of reformism did

not alone provide sufficient cause for a turn to the left.

It is difficult to derive any firm conclusions about the nature of local working-class consciousness from *Social Democracy and Society*. The promised connection between the party and the working class is seldom adequately made. Frequently Nolan succumbs to the temptation to substitute the consciousness of the party militants for that of rank-and-file workers. When taken to an extreme this approach produces peculiar descriptions of the process of class formation. For example, she suggests that "in mediating between workers on the one hand and the state and society on the other, the Social Democrats not only created a powerful movement but a working class as well." Later we learn that the social democrats "had created a party and union movement, a workers' culture and most important, a cohesive working class" (my emphasis). But, as Nolan later admits, workers in Düsseldorf remained fragmented along lines of "occupation and skill, culture and religion, age and sex, birthplace and commitment to urban life and industrial work" if to a lesser degree than in the 1890s. More importantly, political loyalty continued to be divided among the Centre party, the Social Democrats and, after 1918, the USPD and the KPD, while a sizeable number of workers were politically indifferent and uninvolved.

Luxemburg and the left believed that the German masses were innately radical and potentially revolutionary. The left had only to discover the proper means of realizing this potential. In 1914, a local socialist editor wrote: "What keeps the masses from us now is not a belief in capitalism but a disbelief in the proletarian cause. The masses do not doubt the justice of our demands... What we need is an energetic, convincing tactic in all areas." This vision of an organic, homogeneous mass radicalism was fundamental to the left's understanding and justification of its own historical role. But rather than testing these assumptions by attempting to reconstruct working-class political experience in all its variety and complexity, Nolan is content simply to fault the party for failure to discover the proper revolutionary strategy: whereby "the elemental radicalism could have been unleashed." This implies a myopic view of the German working class that historians of the social democratic movement cannot afford to share.

## Evidence of discomfort

Frances Spalding

ROGER BERTHOUD

*Graham Sutherland: A Biography*  
388pp. Faber. £12.50.  
£371 11882 8

On September 16, 1938, Graham Sutherland wrote to Paul Nash: "We are in Pembroke, alternating between enjoyment of the superb country and desolation as we scan the European horizon." Bland and foreboding converge in his Welsh landscapes. Though inspired by a particular area, they are imaginative reconstructions, tinged with Surrealism: clearer in mood to Birnam Wood than the Wales of Richard Wilson or J. D. Innes. Sutherland employed Samuel Palmer's spatial eloquence to suggest, not benign fertility, but encompassing disquiet. He later recalled how the "exultant strangeness" of the landscape aroused in him "a seething feeling of being on the brink of some drama." His discovery of Pembroke had precipitated a style expressive of the historic moment.

"I did not feel that my imagination was in contact with the real," Sutherland wrote of this period, "but that reality was a dispersed and disintegrated form of imagination." At the recent Tate retrospective — the largest and most comprehensive Sutherland exhibition ever mounted — imagination and reality progressively diverge as the artist's career unfolds. His super-real portraits become the counterpart to his nature paintings with their strange and fantastic permutations. In one of these, "The Thicket", painted two years before the artist's death in 1980, the small, monk-like figure hunched over his work is a self-portrait. Behind him gnarled trees rise and flare into a stylized, tangled forest; the artist is ensnared in a world of his own imagination.

The recurrent expression of discomfort and anxiety in Sutherland's art confirms the sensation that he was trapped; that his imagination became a tool not to lighten reality but to escape from it. Roger Berthoud's biography excellently documents the circumstances surrounding Sutherland's life and career. He began as an artist, perpetuating Palmeresque myths, but the collapse of the print market, following the Wall Street crash, obliged him to change his medium. He taught, designed occasional posters, tea-service patterns

and even a postage stamp (never used), and also began to paint. By the 1930s he had become adept at Picasso's method of paraphrasing appearances for emotional effect; his "Thorn" paintings chimed with a mood of post-war Angst. During this decade he also designed for Coventry cathedral the largest tapestry in the world and became renowned as a portrait painter. As the latter, his technique was to seize on a striking characteristic with a brutality which, after the initial affront, was softened by a subtly flattering. Meanwhile influential friends (notably Lord Clerk and Sir Colin Anderson) and the Bessebrook press kept his name in the public eye, transforming a rather private individual into a much vaunted celebrity.

The picture that emerges from Berthoud's book is of an over-sensitive, uncertain man, quick to cross with others. Sutherland fell foul of the owners of Picton Castle, who since 1976 have generously housed the Graham Sutherland Gallery in a disused wing, when they introduced a 50p car park charge. He angered his fellow trustees of the Tate by resigning from the board when the scandal over the gallery's misadministration in 1954 was at its height. This and subsequent chapters on the Churchill portrait and the Coventry commission make riveting, if painful, reading, as they detail the artist's manoeuvring and mismanagement of complicated situations.

Throughout, despite the Berthoud's perceptive summaries and asides, Sutherland's character remains elusive and contradictory. A love of nature is combined with a taste for fast cars; his most intensive bout of gambling coincides with his preparatory work for the Coventry tapestry; left-wing sympathies do not prevent him becoming a socialite among a rich and powerful elite.

Lady Churchill was surprised that one so charming could produce such cruel designs. Often his writings form, situated within an indeterminate space, form knots of interest that snare the eye. His darker emotions found more direct outlet when, as an official war artist during 1940-45, he was sent to record scenes of devastation, Cornish tin-mines, quarrying, open-cast mining, steelworks, and finally a damaged flying-bomb depot in northern France. From 1945 to 1952, 1929 1362 2) deals with the work of Australia's "rebel" artists of the 1930s and 1940s. The book looks at the development of individual artists such as Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, Yosi Bergner and Noel Counihan.

fuliginous reds and ochres; concerned as much with the atmospheric conditions, the grime and heat, as with the shapes of stoops or blast-furnaces. From these sketches he would afterwards make larger, more finished works.

Sutherland's main achievement, however, was his reinvention of the English landscape tradition. It was an achievement that he failed to sustain, as his late re-engagement with the Welsh landscape makes clear. In 1967 he returned to Pembroke to assist with the making of a film on his work, and realized he had been "sadly mistaken" in thinking he had exhausted what the countryside had to offer. With his wife Kathleen, from whom he was rarely parted (a "cherished prisoner" Berthoud calls her, though her managerial role suggests the reverse), he paid regular visits to the area from then until his death. While his wife sat reading in the Jagurs, he sketched until he was exhausted, evidently trying to recapture his earlier vision. He reverted occasionally to his former motifs and compositional techniques: the winding lanes return and the paradoxical use of black to suggest light. In other of his late canvases complex structures are elaborated out of rusting chains, or tree roots; these drew us into an imagined world where there is little sense of discovery.

Sutherland's move to the South of France in the 1950s, as Berthoud surmises, was related to a desire to measure his art against European standards. Much of his painting produced immediately after the war shadows the work of Picasso. In the Tate exhibition Sutherland's personality was best caught in the final room, devoted to drawings and watercolours. He had little feeling for oils and on a large scale tended towards elegant rhetoric. But in these small studies, confined to the stepping pen and thinning ink or wash, his vision is quick and charged with feeling. He excelled within the limitations of the English lyric tradition but swam less easily in the mainstream of European painting.

*Rebels and Precursors: the revolutionary years of Australian art*, by Richard Hesse (324pp. Allen Lane. £25.00). 7129 1362 2) deals with the work of Australia's "rebel" artists of the 1930s and 1940s. The book looks at the development of individual artists such as Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, Yosi Bergner and Noel Counihan.

## The pine-cone brand

C. Blair

HELMUT SELING

*Die Kunst der Augsburgers Goldschmiede 1529-1868*  
3 volumes  
1,401pp. Munich: Beck.

Continental goldsmiths' work has never been appreciated in this country to anything like the same extent as the work of the English goldsmiths. Though a few notable collections of foreign silver have been brought together — including those in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum — British silver collectors have rarely been inclined to look beyond the work of native craftsmen, except perhaps to note that the Huguenots introduced French styles in the late seventeenth century. Their insularity has been encouraged by the scarcity (which still continues) of publications in English on foreign silver, and also by an understandable reluctance to venture beyond the safe and familiar haven of the English hall-marking system. This is to be regretted, because not only is much foreign goldsmiths' work of magnificent quality, but a full understanding of English silver designs is not possible without some

knowledge of the Continental sources that often influenced them so strongly. Influences in the reverse direction were slight, at least until the introduction of the Neo-Classical style in the 1760s, and little English plate surviving from before the end of the eighteenth century shows anything like the vitality, inventiveness and variety of design, or even (dare one say it?) the quality of workmanship, of the best products of the leading Continental goldsmiths.

This is clearly demonstrated in the present exhaustive and sumptuous study by Helmut Seling of the goldsmiths of one of the leading German centres of metalworking, Augsburg. The book is that rare thing, a major work of original scholarship, with full critical apparatus of references, bibliography and indexes, produced in a manner that one has come to associate only with collectable books of the better sort. It comprises three large volumes which cover the whole history of the Augsburg goldsmiths and their products from 1529, when important new craft regulations were promulgated in the city, down to 1869, the year in which the old system of guild and municipal control of the crafts was abolished by the Bavarian state.

The first volume opens with an account of the political, social and economic factors that led to Augsburg becoming a major centre for goldsmiths' work (as well as, of course, for other things in the sixteenth century but it is mainly taken up with a detailed survey of the many different types of plate, both secular and religious, produced there, and a catalogue of the pieces illustrated in the thirty-two coloured plates in the same volume and the 1,099 half-tone plates that comprise Volume Two.

The remaining volume, which is probably the one that will be most welcomed by collectors, dealers and museum curators, deals in detail with the history of the control, organization and operation of the goldsmiths' craft in Augsburg and, above all, with the goldsmiths themselves. Fully referenced accounts of the careers and recorded work of well over 2,000 of them are given, with reproductions of such of their marks as are known, also of nearly 1,000 members of associated crafts and businesses, such as jewellers, seal-engravers and bullion-dealers; in addition, 356 variations of the well-known pine-cone city-mark used between 1529 and 1868 are reproduced. The information contained in these sections, it should be mentioned, is mostly written in German so simple that even someone ignorant of the language should be able to extract all he requires with the aid of a dictionary and a little practice.

The whole work is magnificently produced — the colour-plates are amongst the best ever published of goldsmiths' work — and is altogether outstanding in every way. It is unlikely to be superseded, and no collector or student of German silver can possibly operate without having at least access to a copy.

"among the greatest geniuses of all time" and whose work, according to *Chambers' Encyclopaedia* of 1891, "divided the suffrages of the many between Martin and Turner". Martin was indeed a giant, if not of Turner's stature, but he was not an architectural perspectivist in the sense meant in this book. He never worked for architects; in imagination he was his own architect, but again not of designs intended to be built. Stamp insists rather unfairly, in calling him "mad", Martin, an appellation that was employed in the last century by those who disliked his visionary paintings but surely not one to be revived today — unless, which is unlikely, Stamp is confusing him with his younger brother Jonathan who did suffer from fits of madness brought on by religious enthusiasm. (In 1829 he set fire to York Minster.)

Stamp introduces his chosen perspective drawings with a useful historical essay and annotates each one fully. In spite of the inconsistencies noted above *The Great Perspectivists* is a valuable survey of a Victorian minor art which met its decline not only through the employment of professional draughtsmen but in more recent times through the introduction of mechanical styles of drawing like the isometric and above all through the growing popularity of the architectural mode — a useful working tool in the architect's office but as a means of explaining an architect's intentions to the public a notoriously misleading toy.

## Buildings to come

J. M. Richards

DAVID STAMP

*The Great Perspectivists*  
448pp. with 187 black-and-white illustrations and 23 in colour. Trefoll Press, in association with the Royal Institute of British Architects.  
Drawings Collection, £11.95.  
(paperback, £5.95).  
0 85294 003 6

The architectural perspective is a neglected art form with dubious claims to aesthetic significance. At its best it can constitute a real work of art, but its "art" is often result in a record of architectural historians' attempts to show off the design of a building before it has been constructed, either by reproducing the drawing in a periodical, by including it in a competition drawing, or by publishing it, especially of the Royal Academy's summer show, where perspective drawings have always occupied the greater part of the walls of the architecture room.

David Stamp, who has collected into *The Great Perspectivists* 130 examples, mostly from the RIBA Drawings Collection, refers to a fourth purpose: the use of "replicating" an architect's work for his client. Perspectives are used for this purpose, but I suspect that this was seldom the stage at which

most of those in *The Great Perspectivists* were prepared. When so elaborate a representation of a new building was drawn out and coloured the design had surely been finalized and accepted.

As to technique, one oddity is that these carefully set-up perspectives often bear a misleading relation to how the building will look when completed because of the unreal viewpoint chosen. To see the building as depicted one would in many instances have to be standing inside the building on the opposite side of the street; seldom does it show the oblique view that is all that can be seen of a street facade. Nor does the fixed viewpoint, using two vanishing points, create a natural effect. Moreover, there are certain conventions adopted by perspectivists that have little to do with achieving a work of art: the treatment for example of the human figure and of trees and the often over-dramatic lighting.

Stamp mainly deals with drawings produced between the beginning of the nineteenth century (perspective was little used before the late eighteenth century) and the 1930s. He includes some handsome Victorian drawings — the one period when perspectives were frequently also works of art, especially when they were by the hand of one of the great Victorian architects. Men like Cockerell, Waterhouse and Rickard were splendid draughtsmen, and liked to prepare their own perspectives.

The decline seems to have begun when architects no longer took pride in being themselves skillful draughtsmen

or in employing assistants who were. Instead there arrived on the architectural scene the professional perspectivists who produced show drawings for one architect after another so that the summer exhibition at the Academy contained quantities of examples of his work, giving a sameness to all the buildings depicted; and, notably in the case of Cyril Percy, the professional perspectivist most favoured early in this century, a vulgarity of style sadly lacking the dignity and the richness of the great Victorian architect-draughtsmen, but depending instead on facile tricks of the perspectivist's trade.

One exception in the post-Victorian era was William Walcott, who was a distinguished water-colourist in his own right, though he too employed mannerisms to enhance the drama with which his subjects were portrayed. Walcott's work brings distinction to the section of the book dealing with recent times. Otherwise the section dealing with the finest drawings, although not all of these really qualify for inclusion: J. M. Gandy made some beautiful drawings for Sir John Soane, but Stamp has not been able to resist the temptation of including his most famous drawing, "The Tomb of Merlin", which is an imaginative fantasy never intended to be built.

Less justifiable still is his inclusion of some of the apocalyptic paintings containing architectural scenery by John Martin, the painter whom the *Magazine of Art* declared in 1833 to be



